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THE NEW REPUBLIC

A Weekly Journal of Opinion

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FEBRUARY 20, 1989

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TRB

FROM WASHINGTON

BURNING QUESTION

The scene at Florida State Prison the morning they gave Ted Bundy the chair was straight out of a sleazy teen exploitation movie. Two thousand people, many of them boisterous college students, gathered outside the prison. They held up signs saying things like "I Like My Ted Well Done." Sales of "Burn Bundy Burn" T-shirts were brisk. When the hearse pulled out of the prison yard there were whoops and high-fives. All that was lacking was for Bundy to push open the lid of his coffin and come bounding out in a hockey mask.

Despite the frat-house atmosphere, there was nothing either uniquely American or particularly novel about the Florida festivities. Celebratory crowds at executions were old news when Voltaire and Dickens were describing them; old news, for that matter, when Roman soldiers threw dice and passed around the wineskin at Calvary.

The death penalty is uncontroversial in Western Europe, where execution is unknown, and in the Islamic countries, where it is routine. The debate is in South Africa, where the gallows helps prop up apartheid; in the Communist world, where *glasnost* has brought forth a few mild calls for abolition; and of course in the United States, where a few months ago our nice new president was demanding death for what he called "narcotic drug kingpins" in every campaign speech.

As with so many other goods and services, America offers a greater variety of execution than any other country. Besides the electric chair, the 37 capital punishment states employ poison gas, hanging, shooting, and lethal injection. Electrocution (17 states), invented in 1888, was sold as "scientific" and humane, though in fact it is probably painful and undeniably disgusting: the body convulses, smoke pours from its orifices, the smell of cooked flesh pervades the execution chamber, and the corpse is so hot it cannot be touched for several minutes. In our cool era lethal injection (14 states) is the happening thing. This grotesque parody of medical procedure takes from five to ten minutes, during much of which the prisoner may be awake and in obvious pain. In one recent botched execution in Texas the i.v. tube slipped out of the condemned man's arm and sprayed poison all over the room; that one ended up taking 45 minutes.

However iffy the technology, the United States is moving on the numbers front. After a ten-year hiatus we restarted slowly with six executions between 1977 and 1982. The pace has picked up smartly: Bundy made it an even 100 since 1983. Some 2,200 people wait on the nation's death rows, a proud Republican achievement.

The Bundy case makes a good test of one's views on capital punishment, just as a case of a 14-year-old girl impregnated by rape or incest makes a good test of one's views on abortion. Bundy was such a sadistic, bloodthirsty, thoroughly evil mass murderer that one needn't be a proponent of the death penalty to be sickened by the thought of him living peacefully to a ripe old age, borrowing books from the prison library and granting the occasional interview. Why then was it wrong to execute him?

There are two main arguments for capital punishment, one specious and one worthy of respect. The specious argument is that it deters. Despite massive efforts, no one has ever been able to show that capital punishment lowers the murder rate. "The available evidence," writes James Q. Wilson, no softy, "does not establish that the death penalty has a deterrent effect." This flies in the face of common sense; but just as the common-sense laws of Newtonian physics go haywire near a black hole, so common-sense notions of behavioral incentive may invert in the dark and clotted mental universe of murder. Bundy, for example, moved to Florida only after ascertaining that it is where the death penalty is applied most assiduously.

The argument worthy of respect is that society has a right and a duty to manifest a terrible anger in the face of a terrible crime. "The criminal law must be made awful, by which I mean inspiring, or commanding, 'profound respect or reverential fear,' " Walter Berns, an eloquent defender of the death penalty, has written. "It must remind us of the moral

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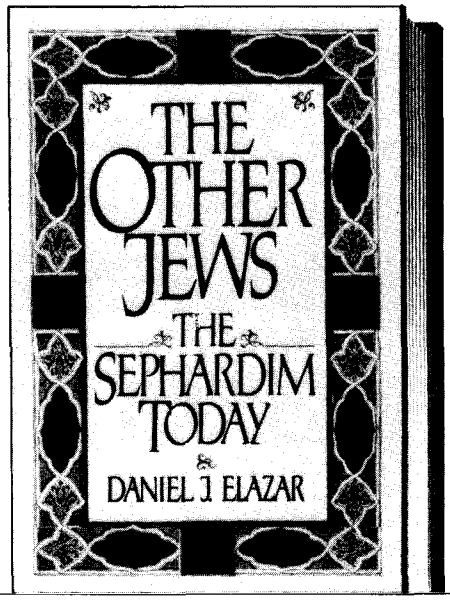

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CORRESPONDENCE

ON BETTER TERMS

To the editors:

Stephan Thernstrom ("Just Say Afro," January 23) states that it is not his place as a white scholar to tell Jesse Jackson what his ethnic label should be, yet that is precisely what he does. Thernstrom implies that the campaign to adopt the name "African-American" is a charade designed to enhance Jackson's public stature. As someone who is involved with ethnic studies, Thernstrom should know that "African-American" has, in the last year or so, begun to appear in social science and humanities literature on black Americans. Why should we use "African-American"? Because it does connote a more substantial cultural claim than "Afro-American." The latter seems to imply a heritage that is American but not authentically or honestly African precisely because of its Americanness. The very word "Afro" is strange in this context—I cannot imagine Italian-Americans using Italo-Americans.

NANCY HAGGARD-GILSON
Somerville, Massachusetts

A SOUND BITE

To the editors:

If you had bothered to read *The Third Wave*, you might have found that I am explicitly *not* a fan of instant push-button electronic decision-making ("Sound-Bite Democracy," December 12). I leave aside the editorial's dubious argument that technology has made America "overly democratic," and mention only its misstatements of my position.

Rather than shoot-from-the-hip electronic voting, I proposed precisely the kind of "buffers" between voters and policy formulation that TNR accuses me of neglecting. Not only have I of course read (and reread) The Federalist Papers, but I explicitly deal with the central problem raised in them—the danger of inflamed public passions leading to hasty, ill-considered decisions. "How," I asked in *The Third Wave*, "would a frustrated and inflamed American public in the mid-1960s, for example, have voted on whether to drop a nuclear bomb on Hanoi? Or a West German public, furious at the Baader-Meinhof terrorists, on a proposal to set up camps for 'sympathizers'?"

While I believe our present system of representative democracy is increasingly creaky, obsolete, and in need of radical overhaul, the issue, I wrote, is "not a question of direct democracy versus indirect. . . . For both systems have advantages, and there are highly creative, as yet underutilized, ways to combine direct citizen participation with 'representation' in a new system of 'semi-direct democracy.' " After making a number of proposals, I then wrote: "Such novel proposals warrant careful experimentation before we apply them on a broad scale."

When I, myself, wrote for THE NEW REPUBLIC many years ago, I took the trouble to read the books I attacked.

ALVIN TOFFLER
Los Angeles, California

FED A LINE

To the editors:

Reagan apologist Robert J. Samuelson feels that President Reagan deserves a large share of the credit for the reduction in inflation early in his first term because he did not try to alter Paul Volcker's interest rate policies by "blasting the Fed in public" ("The Enigma," January 9 & 16). Yet a September 7, 1981, *Newsweek* article quotes the president as having said at a political fund-raising reception, "The Fed is independent, and they're hurting us in what we're trying to do as much as they're hurting everyone else." The Reagan administration backed Volcker for only a short period of time and then panicked, as Samuelson predicts that President Carter would have. It was Volcker's refusal to give in to these pressures that led to the victory over inflation.

BRIAN J. COHEN
Cambridge, Massachusetts

MODERN COPING

To the editors:

I wish I knew whether Michael Ignatieff ("Modern Dying," December 26) has personally struggled with life-threatening disease. My family has struggled for years with the progressive effects of my wife's diabetes. Now, at 41, she is completely blind, on kidney dialysis, and deeply depressed. But however horrible

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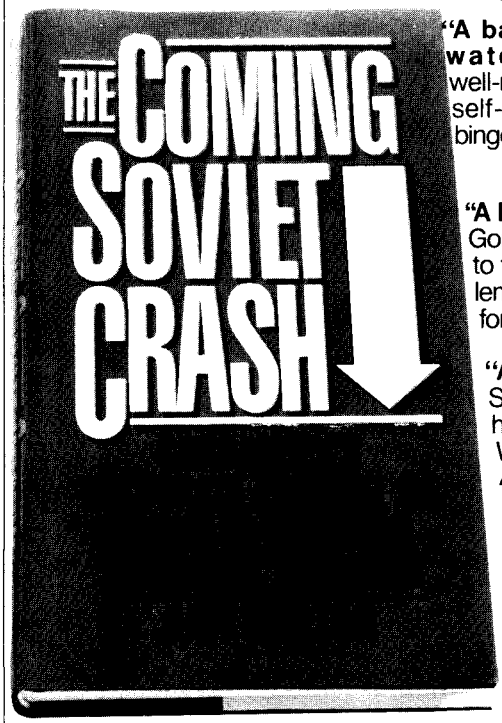
Gorbachev needs us because the USSR needs cash—desperately. But what do we stand to gain-and lose?



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GRIME AND PUNISHMENT

In 1970 Congress passed the Clean Air Act, which set a strict deadline for reducing air pollution to safe levels. That deadline was 1975. It was later extended to 1982 and then to 1987. At the end of 1987 Congress granted another extension. That has now run out. Almost 20 years after the Clean Air Act was passed, the air in more than 50 U.S. cities remains a health risk.

Water pollution presents an equally discouraging picture. Congress passed the Clean Water Act in 1972, with the proclaimed goal of eliminating *all* pollution by 1985. Over $250 billion (in current dollars) has been spent on pollution control. Some streams and lakes have improved; others have gotten worse. On average, according to government figures, water quality hasn't changed much.

That doesn't mean the environmental program has been a total failure. Some pollutants have substantially declined: particulates, sulfur dioxide, and carbon monoxide in the air; bacteria and lead in the water. Moreover, without federal regulation, pollution would now be much worse. If it had increased proportionately with population and GNP, as one former head of the EPA noted recently, American cities would be like Mexico City or São Paulo. Instead, the air in most U.S. cities is somewhat better than it was in 1970.

Still, the nearly two decades since Congress created Earth Day have left no doubt that our system of environmental regulation badly needs an overhaul. Overloaded with unrealistic deadlines and sweeping legislation during the 1970s, battered by budget cuts during the '80s, the Environmental Protection Agency now needs to devise a regulatory approach that's flexible and effective, and that relies as much on market-based incentives as rigid penalties. As perverse as this may sound, the EPA needs to stop trying to ban pollution and start letting companies pay for the privilege of polluting.

It's not easy to explain the current regulatory system, because the federal pollution statutes have grown to be almost as complicated as the tax code. As a practical matter, the pollution statutes basically require polluters to use the strongest feasible means of pollution control. Unfortunately, attempts to set rigid levels of pollution control have three basic flaws.

First, this method is tortuous. The EPA has to investigate the pollution control technologies and economic conditions in each individual industry to find the best technology that companies can afford. A major EPA rule may require tens of thousands of pages of documentation, including careful responses to dozens of arguments raised by industry. Even then, the courts often require the EPA to retrace its steps. Years may pass between the beginning of a proceeding and the final approval of a regulation by the courts.

Second, the current method makes no economic sense. Why should two companies that cause radically different amounts of environmental damage be forced to spend the same amount on pollution abatement? With the broad, all-inclusive standards now in use, the solutions sometimes cost far more than the problems. In one notorious case, the courts required two West Coast paper mills to install expensive pollution control equipment even though the pollution was harmlessly diluted by the Pacific. It took a special act of Congress to rescue the mills, and not many companies can get that kind of legislative attention. Moreover, congressional intervention sometimes makes things worse. Congress has specifically required the use of expensive scrubbers even at power plants where pollution could be controlled much more cheaply by switching to low-sulfur coal.

Third, the current approach to regulation asks the EPA to do a job it is fundamentally incapable of doing. The agency cannot possibly master the economics and technology of dozens of industries, from petrochemicals to steel to electric utilities. It is bound to make mistakes in both directions: asking more than some companies can ultimately achieve while letting others off too lightly. A series of careful studies has shown that more carefully tailored controls could save 30 percent to 50 percent of the current expense of pollution control (now about $50 billion a year). Some of those savings, in turn, could be used to reach a higher level of pollution reduction.

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Both industry and the environment would benefit.

The unifying flaw behind the current approach is that the EPA has the desire to regulate pollution but not enough information to do it efficiently, while industry has all the information but no desire to use it. A reflexive, and laudable, response to this problem would be to beef up the EPA's resources. But more fundamentally, we need to create incentives for industry to use the information it has on hand.

The basic idea is to turn pollution into a cost that, like any other expense, the company will want to minimize. This can be done directly by imposing a fee or tax on the pollutants released into the environment. It can be done indirectly by making companies pay for pollution permits. The government could even auction off the permits (a nice "revenue enhancer"). Alternatively, companies with low pollution levels could sell pollution rights to companies with poorer controls—financially rewarding the "clean" companies and penalizing the laggards. All of these schemes would force companies to pay for their pollution, giving them an incentive to find and use the most cost-effective preventive technology.

The most common objection to this proposal is that incentive systems legitimize pollution by making it just another cost of doing business. But regulating polluters is not a goal in itself. We don't regulate pollution because smokestacks and discharge pipes are inherently immoral. We regulate pollution because it comes at a cost, perhaps one not as quantifiable as the price of an air scrubber, but a cost nonetheless. If we can get a cleaner environment at less expense, it would be foolish to pass up the opportunity.

A more valid criticism is that we have too much invested in the current regulatory system to throw it out and start over. That's true. For now, we should experiment with incentive systems, using them to supplement the current approach. Beginning in the Carter administration, the EPA has made some valuable moves in this direction, mostly in connection with new pollution sources. These limited innovations have already saved $500 million to $700 million in compliance costs, with no loss in environmental quality. We need much more of the same.

In an administration where environmental affairs were often relegated to the likes of James Watt and Anne Gorsuch, genuine reform was out of the question. But unlike his predecessor, George Bush seems eager to establish his bona fides as a defender of the environment. The political climate now holds the promise for real progress. Next time someone says it is morning in America, maybe the smog won't obscure the sun.

Local Hero

There has been no sign that the uprising in the West Bank and Gaza Strip will wind down soon. Though somewhat fewer Palestinians seem to be involved in attacks on Israeli civilians and soldiers, the nature of those attacks has changed for the worse: fewer stones, more firebombs, stabbings, and shootings. And when a general strike is called, almost no one goes to work. Some stay home out of fear, of course, but the discipline and commitment of others are impressive. It is out of frustration and anger, then, more than out of tactical opportunity, that the Israeli army has once again stepped up its effort to bring the uprising under control.

There are some Israelis who are always ready to believe that one more escalation will do the trick. But many soldiers, and not only the grunts, are restive at being forced to perform tasks so out of line with the ethos and the self-image of the defense forces. The chief of staff himself has said that there is no military solution—at least, no morally acceptable military solution. (The Arab states wouldn't be constrained by such scruples, but that's another matter.) Late last month Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir met with a unit in occupied Nablus; the soldiers gave him several earfuls, another exhilarating manifestation of resilient democracy at work, even under siege. Defense Minister Yitzhak Rabin is one of those rare hard-liners—too reflexively a hard-liner, we think—who nonetheless agrees with his top brass that the confrontation between Israel and the Palestinians will only be resolved finally in a political forum and through a political process. So, after having announced the new and harsher rules for the use of rifle fire with plastic bullets against Palestinian violence, Rabin floated a proposal long bruited about in Labor circles: free elections through which the Palestinians could choose their own representatives to begin the long-delayed process of negotiation with Israel. Predictably, the Israeli right was horrified, judging correctly that Rabin contemplates some form of Arab sovereignty over much of the occupied lands. And Yasir Arafat rejected the idea out of hand, taking refuge behind "the children of Palestine" who, he said, had already spurned the notion.

A few weeks ago Arafat was quoted, here and elsewhere, as threatening the life of Mayor Elias Freij of Bethlehem for proposing a truce in the uprising that would lead to the elections and negotiations that Rabin envisions. Press reports had Arafat saying that anyone who puts forward such a suggestion "exposes himself to the bullets of his own people." Then came the inevitable denials, given credibility by a pandering article in the *New York Times* by Youssef Ibrahim on January 18. The next day, however, the State Department released its text of what Arafat actually had said: "Whoever thinks of stopping the *intifada* before it achieves its goals—I will give him ten bullets in the chest."

Of course Arafat doesn't want a cease-fire; he believes that every Palestinian death in the territories strengthens his political position in the world. Nor does he want elections. He has indicated as clearly as possible that he's ready to enforce his will by terror. The nations whose deference has made Arafat so euphoric in recent weeks now need to let him know that more *intifada* bloodshed

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won't win him any more concessions from them—or more concessions from Israel, which is what will count in the end.

Maybe the Israeli right is moving. Even Foreign Minister Moshe Arens, a hawkish Likudnik, has said that Israel must recognize Palestinian aspirations. And Prime Minister Shamir has outlined a peace plan of his own. Rabin's plan is less abstract. He has added to its plausibility by releasing from prison Faisal al-Husseini, the most prominent supporter of the PLO in the territories and a credible negotiating partner. In an interview with Joel Brinkley of the *Times* (January 30), Husseini seemed open to the election proposal and acknowledged as a precondition the muting of Palestinian violence. Brinkley reports that Husseini appeared also to endorse Rabin's notion of Palestinian confederation with Israel or with Jordan. We are, of course, very far away from such solutions, and the ideas now being floated by both sides may just be softening-up tactics.

Still there is cause for hope in the fact that Husseini is a prominent Palestinian who appears not bound by Arafat's views (even though he does ritual obeisance to the roving chairman). There are, in fact, many differences—in interests and in experience—between "pro-PLO" Palestinians in the territories and those in the diaspora. The clouding of these differences has been Arafat's stock-in-trade for decades. But it is the Palestinians living under Israeli occupation whose grievances are the salient ones. Husseini may be able to represent these—certainly much better than Mayor Freij, who works under the great psychological disadvantage of being a Christian among the Muslims. Husseini, by contrast, descends from an influential and venerable Muslim family. In a society, moreover, in which clan matters far more than the modern Western imagination might grasp, even a relative moderate like Husseini still carries the cachet of his notoriously bloodthirsty (and pro-Nazi) kinsman, Hajj Amin, the late Grand Mufti of Jerusalem. More than that, Husseini is the son of Abdal Qadir Husseini, who died a genuine hero in the battle for Jerusalem in 1948. If Faisal al-Husseini is really serious about taking the conciliatory path in spite of Arafat's threats, then he too is a brave man.

It is a foregone conclusion that the Europeans will always tilt toward Arafat. But what the United States does is much more important. The give and take between Rabin and Husseini should be encouraged. And if Husseini will lead the Palestinians to elections and those elected will go to the table, then the United States, which is the only power with any real moral authority in Jerusalem, will have to make sure that Israeli concessions are meaningful.

Out Of Bounds

Georgetown University basketball coach John Thompson had a good reason to walk off the court in protest a few weeks ago. Unfortunately, it isn't the reason he cited. The occasion was a change in the National College Athletic Association's scholarship rules. Thompson's complaint is that by denying scholarships to freshman athletes who fail to score either a 700 (out of 1600) on the SATs or a 15 (out of 36) on the ACTs, the NCAA's Proposition 42 discriminates against blacks, who as a group score lower than whites on standardized tests. But the real problem isn't Proposition 42. It's the failure of public schools to prepare blacks for college.

Though "cultural bias" does explain some of the test score gap, it doesn't, as Thompson claimed, explain nearly all of it. Both the ACT and SAT are to some degree achievement tests; though the SAT is said to measure the "aptitude" for college work, that aptitude is in good measure a product of the previous 12 years of education. The main reason inner-city blacks score so poorly on these and other achievement tests is that not much achieving gets done in inner-city schools. That is what Thompson should have been protesting.

The meager NCAA standards for scholarship eligibility that exist in the absence of Proposition 42 do little to combat the shoddy secondary schooling of many black athletes. To qualify for a scholarship, students merely have to graduate from high school with a C average in the core curriculum, a feat that in some public schools requires virtually no learning.

It is undeniably a worthwhile goal to toughen this requirement, as Prop. 42 would, by insisting that scholarship recipients demonstrably acquire in high school the minimum intellectual skills needed to profit from higher education. The valid qualms about Proposition 42 are more technical. Should standardized tests be the measure? Probably, since, whatever their flaws, there is no other universal yardstick. Is it the NCAA's place to impose such requirements on all Division I colleges regardless of their particular academic standards? Arguably. Should a rule like Prop. 42 take effect soon after its passage, before high school students have had time to adjust their study habits accordingly? Definitely not. If the NCAA, which will now review Prop. 42, decides to proceed with it, enforcement should be postponed until 1993, when students who are currently high school freshmen will graduate. This will allow time for recruiters and educators to start sending the right signals.

One consequence of the Thompson episode was to give the nation's sportswriters a chance to opine on a complex public policy issue. The result was a reminder of why society generally confines sports writers to the sports page. A good chunk of the *Washington Post* sports staff, for example, divided its time between lavishing praise on Thompson and parroting his various utterances on the subject. Thus, one columnist indignantly echoed the observation that 90 percent of the 600 or so students who would be affected by Prop. 42 are black, and many of them are poor; hence the rule victimizes poor blacks. What wasn't noted is that the vast majority of the students who fill in those 600 vacated slots will also be black, and many of *them* will be poor. The main difference

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between the old poor blacks and the new poor blacks is that the new ones will have gotten enough out of high school to stand a fighting chance of profiting from a college education. Seen in this light, Prop. 42 is a way to allocate resources more productively among the needy. And it is a welcome attempt to use athletic scholarships as something more than recruiting incentives; to turn them into, well, scholarships.

NOTEBOOK

□ ONE BRIEF SHINING MOMENT: Qualified congratulations are due to George Bush for trying to talk about the drug problem in rational terms. In late January Bush declared that the main thrust of his War on Drugs would be drug education. It was almost as if he had read one of TNR's several complaints about the futility of an expensive supply-side approach that, among other things, panders to authoritarian impulses and subordinates foreign policy to social pathology. Of course, within days Bush was furiously backtracking, claiming he had been misunderstood. But who could blame him? If he'd stuck by his guns, he would have had to endure endless griping from the right. Most notably, he (not to mention the rest of us) would have been subjected to several more of Abe Rosenthal's War on Drugs columns in the *New York Times*, much like the one penned right after Bush's initial pronouncement. Rosenthal, the Jack Webb of political commentary, put his finger on the pulse of America and declared: "The country believes that drug addiction is a ferocious danger to the nation. The country does not need more statistics. The country knows, and yearns for action." That settles that. And he seems to be right: On the very day he wrote, a Delaware state senator introduced a bill that would make drug dealing punishable by public whipping. Well, anyway, the new breeze of cool reason was nice while it lasted.

□ TROOPS MASSING:

India Says 2,000 Troops Will Leave Sri Lanka

—*New York Times*, January 2

4,000 Indian troops to leave Sri Lanka

—*Boston Globe*, same day

(thanks to Roy A. Cramer, Needham, Massachusetts)

□ SNOB APPEAL:

After 20 years, anti-snob zoning found ineffective

—*Boston Globe*, January 1

Zoning law weathers conflict

After 18 years, Mass. anti-snob rule called a success

—same paper, next day

(thanks to David Luberoff, Cambridge, Massachusetts)

□ POLITICAL SCIENCE:

Erratum

Hayward R. Alker, Jr. "The Dialectical Logic of Thucydides' Melian Dialogue" (September 1988, 805–20). On page 811, col. 1, line 40 should read

$$\sim D/(N_1/\sim S_1 \ \&\ N_2/\sim S_2)\&!(N_1/\sim S_1 \ \&\ N_2/\sim S_2).$$

—*American Political Science Review*, Vol. 82

(thanks to David A. Welch, Cambridge, Massachusetts)

□ MASSACHUSETTS MIRACLE:

Dukakis asks for $604m tax hike

—*Boston Globe*, January 13

Dukakis Seeks $730 Million In New Massachusetts Taxes

—*New York Times*, same day

Duke's proposed $735M hike faces dogfight in Legislature

—*Boston Herald*, same day

□ OH, SHIITE:

SHIITES ANNOUNCE TRUCE IN LEBANON

—*New York Times*, January 26

Truce Between Shiites In S. Lebanon Collapses

—*Washington Post*, same day

(thanks to Beth Silverman, Washington, D.C.)

Carlos Salinas, superman.

A GORBO FOR MEXICO

CHEER UP. We live in an age of heroes, after all. The political and economic reform wave that's sweeping the world is producing them all over the place—leaders and rebels (in some cases, rebels turned leaders) who are courageously challenging the old arrangements in their countries to advance toward capitalism and/or democracy. My list includes Lech Walesa, Corazon Aquino, Deng Xiaoping, Roh Tae Woo, José Napoleón Duarte, Raúl Alfonsín, Benazir Bhutto—yes, and Mikhail Gorbachev. Some of them are flawed, some will fail, some (like Gorbachev) we will have mixed feelings about. But whether or not we think

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it's in America's interest to help them, we can't avoid admiring them and rooting for their success.

Among all the world's potential political heroes, we should be pulling especially—and actively—for Mexico's Carlos Salinas de Gortari, who as planning minister and now president has instituted an economic reform plan that—as one U.S. congressional expert put it—"makes Gorbachev's *perestroika* look piddling." For seven years Mexico has been undergoing the agonizing readjustments, including reduced government spending and price increases, that still lie ahead for the Soviet bloc. The average person's standard of living has declined by half. Like Gorbachev, Salinas faces fierce opposition from an entrenched old guard—in the bureaucracy, the unions, some businesses, his Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI), and the left-wing opposition. He is also harried by conservative reformers who say he is not moving fast enough.

IN MEXICO, *glasnost* is sufficiently advanced that Salinas nearly lost the 1988 presidential election. He seems to have tightened the screws since then, but economic failure could lead to opposition political victories in the future. The likeliest turn is to the left—toward debt repudiation, stimulative spending, and state control—as seems to be happening already in Ecuador, Brazil, Peru, and Argentina. Leftist economic policies almost surely will lead to political chaos, and in Mexico, the left is also distinctly anti-American.

The Bush administration, fortunately, seems to understand the stakes in a way that the Reagan administration never quite did. The line emanating from the White House is that Mexico represents not just an economic concern, but an urgent national security concern. An interagency task force reportedly has begun trying to devise a debt-relief package of the kind that Salinas tells visitors is absolutely necessary for his country to grow and his reform movement to survive. But so far one suggested Treasury formula has been rejected, and reaching agreement may be complicated by rivalry between U.S. banks and by the reluctance of normally pragmatic Secretary of State James Baker to confess that the debt-rescheduling plan he instituted under Reagan has failed.

Senator Bill Bradley, America's foremost advocate of debt relief, is just back from a trip to Mexico, and he says the United States has less than six months to get a plan in place before Salinas is forced to resort to "nationalistic options"—that is, some form of debt repudiation. According to Bradley, Mexico has done everything the United States could reasonably ask in the way of reform, including cutting government spending by nine percent of GNP over the past five years."That's the equivalent of three Gramm-Rudmans by the United States," Bradley said.

Mexico has sold off dozens of state-owned enterprises, including industrial plants, hotels, and Aeromexico airlines, and other visitors report that Salinas has compiled a new privatization list of 100 more major companies, including the national telephone company, Teléfonos de México. Tariffs have been reduced, government subsidies have been eliminated, import and export permit requirements have been lifted, and the government is now allowing foreign companies full ownership of Mexican enterprises, waiving the law that requires 51 percent Mexican ownership. Foreign investment is being allowed in petrochemicals and contemplated in banking, previously considered "strategic enterprises."

Moving from a bureaucratized, corrupt, centrally planned and government-protected economy to a modern, internationally competitive one—a process that is far from complete—has involved extraordinary sacrifice on the part of Mexican workers. The official unemployment rate is 12 percent; unofficially it's much higher. The pain—plus the PRI's well-deserved reputation for corruption—has created political openings for Salinas opponents on the left and the right. The left, led by former PRI politicians Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas and Porfirio Muñoz-Ledo (Mexico's former U.N. ambassador, recalled after pulling a gun on a New York motorist during a traffic dispute), has an attachment to government controls and populist spending programs. It also blames the United States for most of Mexico's problems. The free-market-oriented PAN party, based in the north, distrusts Salinas and wants the PRI's 70-year domination of Mexican politics to end.

Bald, thin, and just 40 years old—resembling Gorbachev's English translator far more than Gorbachev—Salinas ran for president last summer advocating *glasnost* (that is, clean elections) as well as *perestroika*. A Harvard-educated technocrat, he had never run for elective office before. Officially, he received 50.7 percent of the vote—the lowest ever for a PRI candidate—but many observers think he actually won less than a majority and his opponents claim he actually finished behind Cárdenas, who received 31 percent officially. PAN got 17 percent.

JUST A MONTH after his inauguration in December, Salinas proved his courage in the most dramatic possible way—sending the Mexican army to arrest one of the nation's most corrupt and powerful figures, the supposedly untouchable Joaquín Hernández Galicia, universally known as "La Quina," boss of the petroleum worker's union. The army blew off the front door of La Quina's house with a bazooka and discovered more than 200 Uzi submachine guns and 40,000 cartridges inside. A longtime adversary of Salinas's efforts to streamline the oil industry, Hernández had backed Cárdenas in the election. After the arrest, Mexico's attorney general accused Hernández of plotting to sabotage oil installations around the country.

Arresting corrupt figures—even for political reasons—is entirely compatible with clean government, but there is some evidence that the July election scare has caused Salinas to de-emphasize *glasnost* in favor of retaining firm political control so that he'll have time to bring off *perestroika*. In municipal and gubernatorial elections last fall in the states of Jalisco and Tabasco, for example, the PRI saw to it that it won by the lopsided margins it used to command in the old days. This can only be temporary, however. Salinas faces congressional elections in 1991, and (unlike Gorba-

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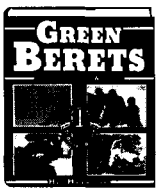

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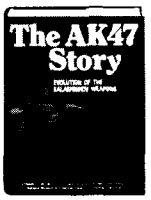

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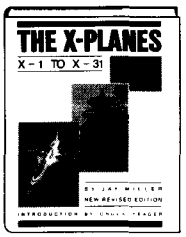

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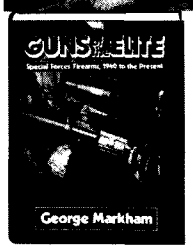

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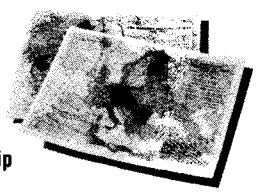

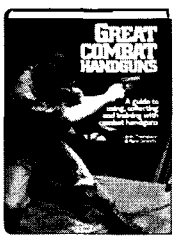

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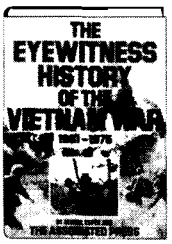

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chev or Deng) he could easily lose if he does not produce the beginnings of prosperity.

Bradley thinks time is shorter than that because the government's latest temporary pact to control wages, prices, and the value of the peso runs out in July. "If they do not have a debt reduction plan in place, the economy will become unglued. Inflation will skyrocket. The peso will fall through the bottom and there will be economic chaos," he said. The basic problem, according to Bradley, is that Mexico has to transfer more than $14 billion abroad each year (eight percent of GDP) in principal and interest on its foreign debt—money that can't be invested in modernizing the country or expanding the economy.

Salinas and members of his Cabinet tell visitors they need to reduce this amount by half—ideally, in a package that would lower Mexico's net capital outflow by $42 billion over the six years of Salinas's presidency. Without such a reduction, they say, Mexico can't possibly grow at the rate of five to six percent per year necessary to give jobs and a better life to a labor force growing at the rate of 3.6 percent per year.

THE BUSH administration has kept its goals and methods for addressing Mexico's debt problems closely guarded, but all indications are that it will not adopt any proposal that involves spending taxpayer money or creating an international debt facility that would buy up the debts of various less developed countries. Administration officials say they don't want to be accused of bailing out U.S. banks that made weak loans. They also don't think the U.S. deficit, or the political climate, will permit spending public funds. And reportedly they do not want to create new international mechanisms in which Japan would be the largest funder and political force. The Treasury reportedly proposed a plan to pressure banks into negotiating debt-reduction packages with debtor countries, but it was rejected by officials of the Federal Reserve.

Baker is said to be still smarting from attacks by Bradley and others on the debt plan he invented as Reagan's treasury secretary. Instead of debt reduction, it involved encouraging private banks to lend new funds to Mexico and other less developed countries, adding to their total debt. Last September Bradley declared, "The Baker plan called for $20 billion in new money from banks for 15 major developing countries. . . . [But] in the last two years, those countries paid foreign creditors $76 billion in interest alone." Bradley said that "the Baker plan is dead. Let us do the decent thing today. Bury it, and start anew."

Bradley says that he, too, opposes debt-reduction schemes that involve spending taxpayer money, although he thinks that the World Bank ought to be involved as an intermediary and Japan as a participant. He says the Bush administration ought to announce that it will do everything possible to assist individual banks to make their own separate arrangements with debtors on a case-by-case basis, using "a full menu" of devices. The menu might include regulatory changes permitting conversion of interest to capital, swaps of debt for equity in Mexican businesses, and various forms of bond floats, some involving interest rate guarantees by the United States and other industrialized countries, whereby Mexican debt could be bought from the banks at a discount.

In a sense, said one private consultant, Baker's plan did succeed—not in helping Mexico and other developing countries, but in giving the banks time to pull away from the brink of ruin. Now that most of them are healthy again, he said, the banks can afford to help the developing countries move away from the brink, by admitting that they will never receive anything like full return on the loans they made. Baker, if his pride demands it, could declare victory and move on to lead the administration in devising Bradley-style debt-reduction plans. If Mexico grows as a result, if Salinas succeeds with *perestroika* and *glasnost*, and if America's southern border remains secure, Baker and Bush can end up heroes, too.

MORTON M. KONDRACKE

WHITE HOUSE WATCH

HIDDEN AGENDA

PRESIDENT BUSH was desperate. He'd invited Javier Pérez de Cuéllar, secretary general of the United Nations, to dine at the White House. It wasn't a formal state dinner. But it was the first time that Bush as president would host a foreign dignitary, and he wanted it to go well. There was a problem. Pérez de Cuéllar was coming with an all-male entourage. Bush needed some female guests, fast. What to do? Bush came up with a clever solution. He decided to exploit (and maybe help prolong) his surprisingly chummy relations with the press. He got on the phone to Press Secretary Marlin Fitzwater, who is single. Know any single women in the press corps? Bush asked. Fitzwater did. Meg Greenfield of the *Washington Post*, Kathy Lewis of the *Houston Post*, and Maureen Bunyan of WDVM-TV in Washington were invited. The dinner was a success.

This is the kind of appealing anecdote that White House aides delight in passing on to reporters. It touches on some traits Bush is putting on conspicuous display: good vibes toward the press, a take-charge attitude. In the early days of a new administration, reporters (including me) are eager conduits for this stuff. Sometimes reporters fall for a scam. In the first week of Gerald Ford's presidency, reporters left the impression that Ford routinely fixed his own breakfast. He didn't, but a press pool had been brought into the kitchen one morning as Ford used the toaster. Ford soon abandoned style for substance. He had an agenda: fighting inflation, pardoning Nixon, and managing the last stage of American involvement in Vietnam.

Bush has talked a lot about an agenda, but it's the one thing he doesn't have. He has plenty of high-toned

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themes, like ethics. He has plans for fine-tuning the final Reagan budget, which he'll spell out in his February 9 speech to Congress. He has symbolic acts to perform, such as holding White House receptions for Senate and House committee chairmen. And Bush has brought one large idea with him from last year's campaign: no new taxes. But that's a rule of thumb, not an agenda.

The absence of an agenda is not entirely Bush's fault. After eight years of Reagan, Republicans don't have any pent-up demands. They got some of what they wanted under Reagan (lower taxes, a military buildup) and have largely given up on the rest (Nicaragua, reducing the federal government). Bush ran on continuity, not change. This isn't the recipe for a first 100 days of dazzling accomplishment. A change of parties is required for that, or else painful and urgent national ailments. Ford had inflation and the aftermath of Watergate. Carter had both inflation and the lingering effects of a deep recession. Reagan had stagflation. Bush encounters prosperity. True, he's got the deficit, but after his budget speech there won't be much to do. "We've got months to kill before budget negotiations [with Congress] get going," says a White House official.

TO FILL the agenda gap, Bush has turned to themes. During the transition, pollster Robert Teeter and other Bush advisers worked up a list of themes to emphasize. They are vague, lofty, and non-ideological. There are more than a dozen of them. Here's a partial list: do what works, invest early, help for neediest, rewarding improvement, choice, kinder gentler, 1,000 points of light, presidential leadership, quality of life, competitiveness, invest in future, innovative and flexible public policy. With the theme approach, a proposal like enterprise zones becomes a higher priority, even though it's not new. Reagan talked about them in his 1980 campaign. What is new is that enterprise zones touch on "eight or nine of the themes," says a Bushie.

Just as he did in his campaign, Bush has designated a theme-of-the-week. Themes have been tentatively chosen well into May. As all the world must know by now, the theme for his first week in the Oval Office was ethics. There was also, according to a Bush transition document outlining the weekly themes, a dash of "values and public service." These were the themes for week two as well. Week three is the buildup for Bush's speech to Congress and the speech itself. Surely you can guess the theme of week four, February 12 to 18. That's right, it's "budget and economic growth week," the time to follow up on the speech, probably with a trip to the hinterland for a speech or two and a town meeting. Week five has more follow-up, then the start of Bush's trip to Japan, China, and South Korea.

When Bush gets back, it's time for "education week," including an education speech to the National Governors Association. March 5 to 11 is for playing up a "drug-free America." Next, it's "invest in our children week," with emphasis on fair housing, child care, and Head Start. Then comes a week for "global health" and "peace and freedom." John Tower should be interested to know that March 26 to April 1 is "defense reform week." In April there are two foreign policy weeks on either side of "national volunteer week," during which Bush will attend a "YES event." (That's Youth Entering Service to America, Bush's plan for dispatching yuppie volunteers to the inner city.) Sad to say, there isn't yet a theme for April 23 to 29, but the next week revolves around the 200th anniversary of George Washington's inauguration. There's even a Pan American week, May 7 to 13.

TO COMPLY with these themes, Bush says some unusual things, for a president at any rate. At the swearing-in of Elizabeth Dole as labor secretary, he sounded like Leo Buscaglia. "John Kennedy challenged us to ask ourselves what we could do for our country," he said. "And let us also each day ask, what can I do for another person? How can I make someone else's load a little lighter? Who can I help to go a little farther? How can I be a friend to someone lonely, or a comfort to someone in pain? Each of us can make this a kind and gentler nation just by the way we treat one another each day." Bush was explicit about his theme in that speech. Remember, it was the week for extolling values. His current favorite value is "conspicuous compassion," a phrase he used in his speech to bureaucrats.

Harping on themes isn't sufficient to pass what Brit Hume, who covers the White House for ABC News, calls the "tombstone test." What's Bush planning for his presidency that is epic enough to be emblazoned on his tombstone? Nothing. Dropping the tax rate on capital gains from 28 to 15 percent and boosting the funding of Head Start won't do it. Bush and his senior aides are aware of this. Bush gets defensive when asked about his agenda. In an interview with two reporters on January 25, he said, "It's a little early to make conclusions one way or another" on whether he has an active agenda. The only issue he mentioned was the budget. That same day John Sununu, White House chief of staff, told reporters Bush is focusing now on "outreach to improve relations with Congress, and his specific goals of dealing with the deficit, and taking advantage of foreign policy opportunities as they come."

Bush is playing a waiting game. He's waiting for both domestic and foreign policy opportunities to seize on. Some White House aides talk longingly about Bush's "first crisis," when he's tested and proves himself (or fails to). They recognize, and so does Bush, that themes are nice, but that it'll take big events for Bush to make a mark. Reagan had the assassination attempt and the air controllers' strike during his first six months in the White House. And Reagan had an agenda. His first 100 days mattered. His big tax and spending cuts were passed before August. "When you're only making changes at the margin on a gradual basis, you don't have that 100 days syndrome," laments a Bush adviser.

It's worse than that. By adhering to sappy themes, Bush is saying less interesting things than is Vice President Dan Quayle, whose leash is short. Both agreed to address the National Religious Broadcasters convention in Washington. Quayle talked about the "evil" that communism has

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produced. He raised doubts about whether the United States would participate, as agreed, in the Moscow human rights conference in 1991. "We must see to it that . . . it is not just a public relations extravaganza for the Soviet leadership. And we must insist that all the agreed upon conditions for such a conference are met." The best Bush offered, in his prepared text, was a tepid endorsement of organized religion. As it turned out, a cold kept Bush from delivering his speech. No matter. It wasn't religion-in-America week.

FRED BARNES

THE PRESS

MALICE TOWARD NONE

IN OCTOBER 1987 *Newsweek* wondered on its cover if George Bush could overcome the "wimp factor." By January 1989 it was comparing him to Superman. Last fall Barbara Bush was a frumpy New England matron. Now, according to *Time*, she's the "silver fox." And Lee Atwater has gone from being "the pit bull of American politics" to the GOP chairman with "quirky charm." What gives? The conventional explanation for these media makeovers is that the press feels guilty about having treated the Bushies so badly during the election, and besides, it's just giving the people what they want—nice stories about their new leaders. But that's only part of the story. Newspapers and magazines also publish puff pieces to ease their access to the corridors of power. Sometimes it's just a chummy clause or sentence casually inserted into a news story. But reporters (especially those newly assigned to a subject, or "beat")—have also been known to write full-blown "beat-sweeteners" or "source-greasers": flattering stories devoted to a single person, a potential source who might be more forthcoming with a little good press.

After Election Day, beat-sweeteners started springing up like dandelions after a strong rain. Naturally, the President-elect and the First Lady got most of the attention. But the competition was fierce—especially in the pre-inaugural frenzy—and before long the entire administration was basking in media admiration. What follows are excerpts from the Bush administration's sunny honeymoon press. Are they source-greasers, or merely outstanding examples of a more innocent quadrennial infatuation with our leader? You decide.

Soon to be a major motion picture: Chief of Staff John Sununu was never a favorite of the *Boston Globe,* especially after his campaign role as Bush's roving Dukakis attack dog. So it was surprising to see John Aloysius Farrell's glowing profile, at the top of the front page, chronicling the former governor's "swift ascent" to "one of the most powerful jobs in the world." "It is a frontier saga," wrote Farrell, "the tale of a brash outsider who rode into a boom town one day, saw opportunity and seized it, and then exploited his state's unique clout in presidential politics to cash in on the chance of a lifetime."

The physical education president: "Loose and limber, Bush even caught Rep. Lynn Martin by the arm as she tripped going up steps." Timothy McNulty of the *Chicago Tribune* observed this chivalric feat. Tom Morganthau of *Newsweek* found the president's new athleticism sexy: "George Bush looks rugged, even macho, standing chest-deep in the Florida surf with his fishing rod."

Fairness in greasing: Robin Toner of the *New York Times* put a bipartisan spin on all the inaugural hoopla by profiling several "important Democrats" as part of the "Bush's Washington: Who's Who" series (the ultimate source-greasing vehicle). Jim Wright is "a proud and driven man." Lloyd Bentsen's "savvy performance" during the campaign has given him "new clout." And then there is Sam Nunn—why, "if the Democrats didn't have Sam Nunn, they would have to invent him."

And bigger than both of them: Bernard Weinraub of the *Times* found Barbara Bush "as steadfast as Mother Courage and as spirited as Auntie Mame."

The silver fox: On *Time*'s January 23 cover was "The Silver Fox," who is responsible, apparently, for all her husband's virtues. In a five-page tribute, Margaret Carlson credits Barbara Bush with convincing George to appoint HHS chief Louis Sullivan—"the only black in Bush's Cabinet"; "nudging" the new president into endorsing more federal funds to fight AIDS; cajoling him into making homelessness a campaign issue ("she really talked hard at him," said an aide, "and rode him until he got it right"); eliciting his pledge to become the "education president"; and sometimes rewriting her husband's speeches "in a softer tone"—"she disagreed behind the scenes with his hardball campaign tactics." In all, "Barbara Bush may prove to be the right woman in the right place. . . . Years of good works behind her, she is the embodiment of the kinder, gentler world that her husband so gauzily evoked during the campaign."

The brunette horse: Alessandra Stanley of *Time* found that "in appearances and interviews, Marilyn has proven to be poised, self-possessed, and far defter than her husband at deflecting hostile questions." And she's sexier than Lauro Cavazos, too.

The Quayle watch: Listening to Quayle entertain the crowd from his p.a.-equipped limousine during the inaugural parade ("Section B, stand 21, how are you?"), Patrick Sloan of *Newsday* concluded: "It was a determined Quayle yesterday, battling back with humor, warmth, and a boyish charm."

Insider Story: "[Army Secretary] John Marsh revealed in his office the other day that he has a shrewd sense of power and how things work in Washington, especially in the Pentagon." That was in a story by the *Times*'s Richard Halloran. Imagine the conversation:

HALLORAN: Mr. Secretary, is there anything you'd like to reveal to me today?

MARSH: Well, yes. I suppose I can reveal I have a shrewd

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sense of power and how things work in Washington.
HALLORAN: I see. Especially, I'd guess, in the Pentagon.
MARSH: Right.

Is that isosceles or equilateral? During the *Times*'s five-part "Bush's Washington: Who's Who?" series, Peter Kilborn wrote that Jim Baker, Nicholas Brady, and Richard Darman together form a "mighty policy-making triangle."

An inductive proof: In early December, when word of Bush's Cabinet choices was beginning to float across to the press, George Hackett of *Newsweek* wrote: "The president-elect's choices all share with Bush a tradition of public service, one guided by a sense of duty to the greater good rather than by some ideological agenda." Faced with this assertion, the magazine then went about the job of proving it—mostly through glowing headlines. Thus Brent Scowcroft was an "Unlikely NSC Tiger" ready to pounce on policy development, and John Tower was a "Radical Reformer" bent on eradicating Pentagon inefficiency. Etc.

A kinder, gentler reporter: David Hoffman of the *Washington Post*, who was tough on Bush during the campaign, has begun a searching reappraisal. At press conferences, he now sees, Bush shines "with precise answers and evident self-confidence." On Inauguration Day, after noting that Bush had assembled his Cabinet with "confidence" and "grace," Hoffman wrote that the new president was "bursting with zeal for his new role."

Hugh Sidey award: To Michael Oreskes of the *Times*, for this throat-lumping invocation of the mood in inaugural Washington: "It was a time when even the hard-bitten residents of this capital city could find something to move them, whether in the personal dramas of famous men passing the rod of power or in the buoyant spirit of victors savoring success."

MICHAEL NEWMAN

SCIENCE AND SOCIETY

BLACK HOLE

A FEW MONTHS AGO Sigma Xi, the scientific honor society, asked its 115,000 members to list the science projects they thought should get federal funding. Predictably, individual research grants came in first place, followed closely by such health-oriented projects as AIDS research. What was more interesting was the lower end of the list. There scientists and engineers showed their disdain for big-ticket items like the space station and Star Wars. But at least those two megaprojects got *some* support. Pity the poor Superconducting Super Collider. It came in last place, a full two percentage points behind "Other."

In another time, the proposed Superconducting Super Collider (SSC) would probably excite the country's scientists. It will be bigger and more powerful than any particle accelerator ever built. But in the budget-tight days of the post-Reagan era, most U.S. scientists see the $6 billion SSC as a rival for funds, and an unworthy one at that. They wonder why the United States wants to build a huge machine that may only duplicate research efforts in Europe and will provide little economic return.

In another time, the SSC would probably excite Congress as well. It is being billed as the country's only hope to stay at the forefront of high energy physics, the sort of patriotic appeal that legislators usually find hard to resist. Not this time. The Super Collider faces stiff competition in the upcoming budget battle—and not just for the science buck. The SSC is a Department of Energy project, meaning it will be pitted against the cleanup of the country's decrepit nuclear plants for funding.

But don't get the idea that the Super Collider is dead. It has friends in high places. Although DOE claims politics had nothing to do with site selection, the choice of Waxahachie, Texas, seems more than coincidental. With a president, a Speaker of the House, and a chairman of the Senate Finance Committee all hailing from the Lone Star State, how can the SSC lose? (In any event, politics surely had something to do with its new name; if built it will be called the Ronald Reagan Center for High Energy Physics, after that great cheerleader for megaprojects everywhere.)

THE SSC will be an oval 53 miles in circumference, roughly the size of the Washington Beltway. It will be inside a tunnel, 150 feet deep, and will consist of two rings, one on top of the other, each made up of 5,000 enormous magnets strung together like pearls. Protons will race through the two rings in opposite directions, going faster and faster, until they reach almost the speed of light. Then they will be directed into one of four Interaction Halls, where they will smash into each other. Special detectors will record the debris, looking for the various particles that make up a proton or hold it together. As a government pamphlet says, it's a little like smashing two clocks together to see what makes them tick.

The SSC will almost surely find the Higgs Boson, a postulated particle very much on the minds of high-energy physicists these days. The question is: Why do we need the SSC to find the Higgs Boson? Couldn't the Large Hadron Collider now planned by the European Organization for Nuclear Research (CERN) also do the job? American high-energy physicists say no. Even if Europe builds it, which isn't certain, the Large Hadron may not have enough power. Besides, if Europe did manage to find the Higgs Boson, it wouldn't be *our* Higgs Boson. It would be *theirs*. They would win the Nobel Prizes; we would only get to read about it.

Of course, opponents of the Super Collider say that's exactly the point: we *would* get to read about it. In fact, in the information age, important research results are disseminated to colleagues so rapidly, by modem or by FAX, that we would read about it roughly as soon as researchers in

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Europe knew about it. And all for free! If American scientists can share the intellectual fruits of the Super Collider regardless of who pays for it, why should U.S. taxpayers foot the bill?

SSC supporters reply with the fear that a European Super Collider would siphon off some of the finest American scientific minds. When American scientists go overseas to work, there is much handwringing about a "brain drain." (When foreign scientists come here, there is high praise for "cross-fertilization.") The Europeans have invited the United States to join them in building the Hadron, but American high-energy physicists don't want to. They say the Europeans should join the United States in building the SSC.

Physicists are probably exaggerating the importance of a Super Collider to America's continued dominance of high-energy physics. But let's suppose that the United States didn't build a new Super Collider and there was slippage in high-energy physics. So what? How often does it happen that having lots of high-powered high-energy physicists does the nation much tangible good? There are much bigger payoffs in commercial, and even military, terms in such fields as solid-state physics, computer science, and molecular biology.

And yet, historically, the nation has lavished attention on high-energy physicists. Ever since they built the atom bomb, they have had disproportionate influence in government. There are only 1,500 of them, a mere three percent of all U.S. scientists, but the field gets more than six percent of the federal science budget. This maldistribution is becoming more critical as private-sector research labs such as Bell Labs and Exxon, focused increasingly on short-term profit, are forsaking long-term research investment.

SUPER COLLIDER supporters like to invoke the magic word: spin-offs. When John Herrington, Reagan's secretary of energy, announced the project two years ago, he compared it to the Apollo program: "It will have spin-offs, discoveries, and innovations that will profoundly touch every American." But when you ask even the most die-hard SSC proponents about spin-offs, they look down and shuffle their feet and mumble. And with good reason. There are signs that the Super Collider is uniquely ill-suited to practical application.

For example, the SSC should teach us a great deal about building magnets out of superconductive material (material with no resistance to electricity). That's important. Whichever country develops the finest skills in magnet design will have a competitive edge in the lucrative new world of superconductivity, which may yield superfast computers, superfast levitating trains, etc. The problem is that the superconductive material DOE will use won't help us here. The department decided to use the first kind of superconductors discovered, the kind that require temperatures just a few degrees above absolute zero (-459.67 degrees Fahrenheit). But attaining that temperature requires liquid helium, which costs about $11 a gallon. Today there are materials that become superconductive at much warmer temperatures—a balmy -234 degrees. These temperatures can be maintained with liquid nitrogen, which costs a mere 22 cents a gallon and can be carried around in a thermos. And there are rumors of even higher-temperature superconductors—some that operate near room temperature—almost every day. But the DOE doesn't want to wait. It says the new superconductors are too brittle for magnets and that the SSC needs the extra cold to help maintain a vacuum. That's unfortunate, spin-off wise. It means that all of the knowledge about superconductivity developed in building the SSC will be for naught, unless you think Amtrak might be interested in a levitating train with a mean temperature just above absolute zero.

The SSC's costs are getting higher and higher. (Its humongous magnets, for one thing, demonstrate a disturbing tendency literally to rip themselves apart.) Just two years ago the Department of Energy said the price tag would be $4.4 billion. But when the Reagan administration submitted its final budget in January, that figure was up to $5.9 billion, and there is every indication it's going to get higher. The Reagan budget asked for only $250 million in 1990 funds. But if Congress approves any amount for the SSC's actual construction—as distinguished from the R&D funding it's gotten already—the project becomes inevitable. Once ground is broken, DOE will be able to come back year after year for refunding and argue persuasively that a half-built Super Collider isn't worth anything at all.

WHAT CONGRESS should do is scrap the SSC and explore the possibility of U.S. participation in building the Large Hadron Collider outside of Geneva. If nothing else, the resulting discussions would be a useful lesson. For a growing number of scientific and technological projects are of such magnitude that it is a waste of resources to have them proceeding simultaneously in two Western countries. It is time to internationalize. Indeed, the United States is already doing that with the space station, a project with considerable commercial and military implications. We will serve as home base for an international research project involving Europe, Japan, and Canada.

Another large-scale scientific project is the sequencing of the human genome—the complete deciphering of the genetic makeup of a human being. Right now the United States plans to spend $3 billion on this project. Like the Super Collider, this is a basic research project, without clear-cut spin-offs. But given the fact that molecular biology is more fertile commercial ground than high-energy physics, the genome project is a more likely candidate for serendipitous benefits. If we offer to send U.S. scientists to Europe for the Super Collider and have Europeans come here for the genome project, we'll probably have gotten the better part of the deal.

JOSEPH TREEN

Joseph Treen, a former *Newsweek* writer, is working on a spy novel about satellites.

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How different would it be?

A World Without *Roe*

THOUGH PRESENTED with many opportunities over the past 16 years, the Supreme Court has yet to retreat from its ruling in *Roe* v. *Wade*, the case that is now understood as establishing a constitutional right to abortion. The Court's ruling this year in a Missouri abortion case may be different. No one knows exactly how the views of the newest justice, Anthony Kennedy, differ from those of Lewis Powell, the *Roe*-supporter he replaced. It seems, though, that Kennedy could well end up siding with *Roe* critics O'Connor, Rehnquist, Scalia, and White, tipping the scale against Blackmun, Brennan, Marshall, and Stevens.

But even if most justices no longer support *Roe*, neither the worst fears of pro-choice partisans nor the highest hopes of pro-lifers are likely to be realized. Only rarely does the Supreme Court make an abrupt break with its past rulings. And the sustained controversy provoked by *Roe* will doubtless discourage the Court from now delivering as stunning a blow to those concerned about women's rights as it did in 1973 to those who expected the law to protect fetal life. What seems more probable is that the line of decisions extending from and expanding *Roe* will be pruned and reshaped to achieve a better balance between the rights of pregnant women and the protection of developing life. Rather than overruling *Roe* outright, the justices may simply broaden the category of abortion-related issues that can be thrashed out in the give-and-take of the legislative process. If so, *Roe* v. *Wade* might well emerge shorn of some of its wider implications. But its narrow holding—that a statute permitting abortion only to preserve the life of the pregnant woman is unconstitutional—would probably remain intact.

Prior to *Roe* v. *Wade*, abortion regulation was left up to the state legislatures. In 1973, however, the Supreme Court examined state abortion laws in the light of the right to privacy that it had discovered a few years earlier in the "penumbra" of the Constitution. To the surprise of many, the Court not only deemed the Texas law in question an unconstitutional abridgment of that right, but offered its opinion that the abortion laws of *all* states were similarly defective.

The Court then outlined its own system of abortion regulation: in the first trimester, the decision must be left to the woman and her physician; after the first trimester and prior to viability (which the Court put at 24 to 28 weeks), the states could regulate, but only in the interest of the safety of the pregnant woman; after viability, the states could regulate to protect the fetus, but only if they did not interfere with the woman's health. In other words, no restrictions on abortion in the interest of preserving fetal life prior to viability were going to be upheld. Subsequent cases made it clear that there would be tough sledding even for post-viability regulation. Among the statutes struck down on the basis of *Roe* have been laws that sought to assure that viable fetuses would have a chance to be born alive, as well as attempts to require women seeking abortions to be informed about alternatives or to observe a 24-hour waiting period.

What kinds of statutes would state legislatures produce if the abortion issue were returned to them, or if, as is more likely, the opening in the window of permissible state regulation were gradually widened? In the six-year period before *Roe* v. *Wade*, 19 states had already liberalized their abortion laws. We can gain some idea of how this law revision process might have played itself out not only by examining these laws, but by examining abortion law in other developed nations that have settled the matter legislatively. The first conclusion is that a middle ground does exist. Although many people consider moral compromise on abortion impossible, Western European experience shows that *political* compromise is not only possible but typical, even in countries as deeply divided on the abortion question as ours.

The contours of these compromises are broadly similar everywhere. Typically, abortion is only lightly regulated in the first trimester. Most countries require some form of justification, but acceptable reasons at this stage include social and economic "hardship" or expansive notions of maternal health. Many of these statutes have preambles affirming the value of human life, and impose short waiting periods (except in emergencies) during which the woman may be made aware of alternatives to abortion. After the first trimester, stronger justification is ordinarily required and more safeguards for the fetus are imposed. Several countries permit second trimester abortions if the fetus has a high probability of severe defects. In other countries, the likelihood of a disability is not an adequate reason to end pregnancy.

These types of statutes fit remarkably well with what polls consistently reveal about sentiment in the United States concerning abortion. Most Americans, including many who, like President Bush, are sympathetic to the pro-life cause, feel uncomfortable about making abortion illegal. At the same time a majority, including many with pro-choice leanings, are uneasy about establishing a nearly absolute right to dispose of developing life. Although public debate has been dominated by those using the language of no compromise, most Americans are less rigid and more uncertain—if not about the morality of abortion, then about how it should be dealt with in a pluralistic society.

If the Supreme Court had not brought the development of American abortion legislation virtually to a halt in 1973, it is probable that by now most American states would have done what most Western nations have done: tried to balance compassion for pregnant women and concern for fetal life, emphasizing the former in the early stages and the latter as the pregnancy advances. But matters have become more complicated since 1973. To begin with, the Court's 1973 notion of viability has been undermined by technological innovations that have reduced the age at which a fetus can survive outside the womb. More important, 16 years have passed during which our political pro-

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cesses have not been allowed to operate in the ordinary way with respect to abortion. Many state legislatures have attempted to restrict abortion within the narrow limits available to them. Like steam escaping through a tiny aperture, these laws have often had a special intensity, a pent-up quality—and nearly all have been struck down by the Supreme Court.

Less well known, however, is that about half the states have made no effort to restrict post-viability abortions. Most legislators were delighted to be relieved of having to stand up and be counted on such a divisive issue. They may be inclined now to look for ways to keep passing the buck. In many states, the local courts will be only too happy to assist this flight from politics. Any new laws that *are* produced in the wake of a *Roe* retrenchment are also certain to be challenged in *state* courts under *state* constitutions. Inevitably, there will be some state Supreme Court judges who, like the majority justices in *Roe* v. *Wade*, are eager to substitute their own views of proper social policy for those of elected representatives. The U.S. Supreme Court will thus not see the end of its involvement with abortion anytime soon.

If that is the case, and if whatever form future American abortion regulation may take fails to fulfill completely the aims of either the pro-life or pro-choice movements, why should the Supreme Court put us through the trouble of returning the issue in large part to the hurly-burly of the state legislative process? One reason might be to make us define ourselves. In countries like ours, where people have little in the way of a common religion, history, or traditions, law often takes on the role of a carrier of values. It reveals who we are and what kind of society we want to be. Abortion law, in particular, is freighted with symbolism about life, liberty, gender, and dependency. By allowing one important value, the right of privacy, to trump all others, the Supreme Court in *Roe* v. *Wade* did not do justice to the complexity of American sentiment about the grave and agonizing issues involved in abortion.

Furthermore, when the Court declares an area off-limits for legislation, the losers are left with few political outlets. They can seek a constitutional amendment, or they can work for a change in the Court's mind or composition. Because of the deleterious effects of confining political activity to those channels, it seems that a certain degree of modesty on the part of the Court is appropriate, at least in those areas where there is no clear guidance in constitutional text or tradition. Legislatures, with all their well-known defects, are still the branch of government to which we have entrusted the main business of weighing and deciding among competing interests and values. Moreover, we often benefit from permitting the states to function as what Louis Brandeis called a laboratory system, testing diverse approaches and tailoring them to local circumstances. The process of bargaining, education, and persuasion that goes on in and around legislatures is well suited to issues like abortion, where most people are unsure about what the "right" approach is, and where the factual picture is changing constantly with biological and technological advances. With a social problem of such complexity, the best way to proceed is not through a showdown in court, where winner takes all, but by keeping dialogue alive in the nation's statehouses, where there is always another day.

MARY ANN GLENDON

Mary Ann Glendon is professor of law at Harvard University and the author of *Abortion and Divorce in Western Law* (Harvard University Press).

Gorbachev's nationality crisis.

THE EMPIRE BREAKS UP

BY JACQUES RUPNIK

"Great Russia has forged forever the indestructible union of free republics." —from the Soviet national anthem

From the beginning, Mikhail Gorbachev understood that his effort to restructure the Soviet economy would encounter at least two obstacles: the resistance of the Party bureaucracy and the passivity of a society kept for some 70 years under anesthesia. Hence his decision to supplement *perestroika* with *glasnost*. Greater freedom of speech was intended to expose the misdeeds of a "Brezhnevite" bureaucracy and thereby mobilize the support of a disgruntled populace. *Glasnost* has succeeded in bringing about a social awakening, but it is not the kind Gorbachev had in mind. It has developed on the Soviet periphery rather than in the heart of Russia, and it is committed not to a single reform program but to a variety of nationalistic

Jacques Rupnik is senior fellow at the Fondation Nationale des Sciences Politiques in Paris and author of *The Other Europe*, companion volume to a British television series.

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movements. The last two years have seen Armenians fighting with Azerbaijanis over territory; anti-Russian riots in Kazakhstan; Crimean Tatars, who were deported by Stalin to Central Asia, demonstrating in Moscow for the right to return home; and people in the Baltic republics challenging the very foundation of their allegiance to the Soviet Union. From Central Asia to Europe, the Soviet Empire is cracking at its seams.

And the worst is yet to come. For the nationalist crises that have burst most fully into view—the Baltic and the Armenian—are minor compared with those that are likely to flare up before long, involving the Ukrainians and the Muslims of Central Asia. Unless a policy can be developed to keep these movements under control, Gorbachev's *perestroika*—and even the Soviet empire itself—may be living on borrowed time.

DRAWING BY VINT LAWRENCE FOR THE NEW REPUBLIC

The resurgence of nationalism has shattered the carefully manicured myth of the Soviet Union as a harmonious community of brotherly nations "drawn together" by the construction of socialism. Now that *glasnost* has rubbed off the ideological varnish, the Soviet Union appears as what it is: the last colonial empire still in existence. And it is an empire even more anachronistic than most. For demographic trends are about to turn the imperial nationality—the Russians—into a minority, and the Russians are seen by many non-Russians—especially the Balts and the Georgians—as economically and culturally backward. Can Gorbachev's reforms, designed to bring the Soviet Union into the 21st century, sustain an increasingly absurd imperial system inherited from the 19th century?

It is ironic that Gorbachev's first nationalist headache originated in Armenia. Though the Armenians now seek the preservation of their culture and language in the face of Russian influences, the basic orientation of Armenian nationalism is not separatist, or even anti-Soviet. Its strength derives, rather, from memory of the 1915 massacre of 1.5 million Armenians by the Turks. Indeed, the current Armenian campaign to reclaim the Nagorno-Karabakh province is directed less at Moscow than at Azerbaijan, which has a Turkish population. On paper the claim is a rational one: to reunite a territory populated mainly by Armenians with the rest of Armenia. But the dispute acquired an irrational, tribal character after the anti-Armenian pogrom in Azerbaijan a year ago. The depth of the enmity was seen during the Armenian earthquake in December. In Azerbaijan, news of the earthquake, according to a Western reporter, "engendered a holiday atmosphere." The tragedy was seen by young demonstrators as "Allah's punishment."

The earthquake also revealed the depth of Gorbachev's political skill. He turned the inefficiency of aid to the victims into an indictment against local officials not sympathetic to his policies. He tried to expose the triviality of tribal feuds in the face of a tragedy that called for a truly collective Soviet reconstruction effort. Most important, he decapitated the Armenian nationalist movement by putting behind bars the entire leadership of the Karabakh Committee, which tried to have the distribution of aid placed in the hands of Armenians rather than Soviet officials. It is unclear how many political prisoners there actually are in the Soviet Union today, but we know there are a dozen new ones: the 12 angry men from the Karabakh committee.

But all of Gorbachev's savvy may not be up to the challenge. His imprisonment of Armenian nationalists has cost him popular support. And his longer term solution—a recent proposal to put Nagorno-Karabakh under a predominantly Russian "special administration" while keeping it within the borders of Azerbaijan—will not appease the nationalists. Yet he cannot afford to go further. Actually altering the borders between two Soviet republics would set a dangerous precedent in a multinational empire where ethnic and political borders often do not coincide. And, more immediately, such a move might provoke strong anti-Moscow reactions among the Shiite Muslims in Azerbaijan, which could have a spillover ef-

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fect on the Sunni Muslims in Soviet Central Asia.

The rise of nationalism in the three Baltic countries is less violent and tribal and more political, channeled through existing institutions. Nonetheless, it too challenges the very basis of Moscow's relations with the Soviet republics. The subject of the forced annexation of Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania in 1940 and the subsequent mass imprisonment of elites and political opponents had been taboo until *glasnost*. Now commemoration of the events of 1939-40 has become the occasion for national self-assertion. Stretching *glasnost* to the utmost, the Lithuanian publication *Sajudzio Zinios* last year printed the secret protocol of the Nazi-Soviet pact of 1939. Balts could read for the first time the agreement that "in the event of a territorial and political rearrangement in the areas belonging to the Baltic states (Finland, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania), the northern boundary of Lithuania will represent the boundary of the spheres of influence of Germany and the U.S.S.R." Thus the denunciation of Stalinist crimes—a favorite theme of *glasnost*—led to a debunking of the official Soviet myth about the "voluntary union" of 1940, and thus to questions about the very legitimacy of Soviet rule.

SINCE THE Balts were the last to "join" the Soviet Union, it seems only natural that they would be the most sensitive to constraints on their autonomy. Two recently proposed amendments to the Soviet Constitution raised this issue and thereby stirred political nationalism. The first strengthened the right of the Supreme Soviet in Moscow to overrule decisions by the republican parliaments. The second gave the Soviets the right to declare martial law and other "special forms of administration." The first was rejected by the Balts as negating the "right to secession" ostensibly recognized by the Soviet Constitution. The "special powers" amendment, though probably introduced with the Armenian conflict in mind, was also taken personally by Balts, who feared it could apply to them. Both amendments finally passed, although in watered-down form.

Moscow's insensitivity in pushing through the amendments transformed the hitherto primarily cultural and economic quest for the autonomy of Baltic states into an overtly political one. The popular fronts, the mass organizations that have mushroomed in the Baltic republics, are now raising the question of sovereignty. In Latvia this aim was cautiously worded by the front as "a true government by the people . . . and the settlement of the nationality problem." In Lithuania the front boldly seeks "democracy and the restoration of the political, cultural, and economic sovereignty in Lithuania." The Estonian Parliament went further, proclaiming at an extraordinary session in November its right to veto laws passed by the Supreme Soviet (see page 24). The resolution also declared all Estonian land, natural resources, and industries the property of the republic.

For Gorbachev, accepting the republic's right to veto Moscow's decisions is just as unthinkable a precedent as the redrawing of boundaries demanded by the Armenians. Once again the very basis of the empire is being challenged. This explains the vehemence of Gorbachev's rebuff. In a major speech in November, he issued his strongest condemnation of nationalism yet, saying that Estonia's defiance of central power affected "the destiny of our whole union." Estonian land and property, he said, belong to all Soviet people. Nationalism was now presented as the main threat to his economic reforms: "Comrades, it would be disastrous, it would put in jeopardy our *perestroika*."

The solution to Gorbachev's Baltic problem may be to make a virtue of necessity and turn the Baltic republics into a laboratory for *perestroika*. The Balts have a long prior history of free markets and are probably the most economically advanced of the Soviet peoples. They are keen to develop closer economic ties with northern Europe and Scandinavia—whose historical links to them are as strong as Russia's. Moscow could defuse the drive for political autonomy by granting economic autonomy: let the Baltic states liberate their economies at whatever pace they see fit, and let them trade with their neighbors to the west on their own terms, free from Moscow's regulation. The Baltic countries as a showcase for *perestroika* and a channel for Western technology transfer to the Soviet Union—as the Hong Kong of the U.S.S.R.? It would be a daring move, but Gorbachev has shown no aversion to departures from tradition.

Compared with Gorbachev's other nationalism problems, the unrest in the Baltics is fairly manageable. There are only seven million people in the Baltic region, one-fourth of whom are ethnic Russians. Besides, the unrest is channeled through political institutions; local Communist elites have joined the popular fronts and are well positioned to moderate nationalist aspirations. The most serious nationalist threat to Gorbachev is likely to come not from the current crisis points in the Baltic or the Caucasus, but from three other sources: the Ukrainians, the Muslims of Central Asia, and ultimately the Russians themselves.

THE UKRAINE, with a population of 45 million, has sometimes been called the largest European nation without a state. So far it has been deceptively quiet—and uncharacteristically so. In the aftermath of the Bolshevik Revolution and of World War II (which followed a Ukrainian famine provoked by Stalin's terrorist collectivization drive), only brute force quashed Ukrainian bids for independence. Then in the 1960s and early 1970s, Ukrainian writers pioneered the revival of the national question in the Soviet Union. But after the purge of Shelest, then the local Party boss, the Ukraine was subjected to "normalization," and its dissidents were sent to the Gulag.

While Balts were seizing the new opportunities of *glasnost*, the Ukraine had to wait because its leader, Vlodimir Shcherbitsky, 70, the last prominent Brezhnevite still in office and head of the second largest Communist Party in

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the U.S.S.R., kept the lid tightly on. But it was loosened by the celebration last year of the millennial anniversary of the Christian Church in Kiev. (It had also been loosened a few years earlier by the Chernobyl disaster, which left the natives restless.) Ivan Dziuba, a prominent nationalist essayist whose work was once suppressed, has been published in the December issue of *Kommunist*, and writers in Kiev now openly call for Shcherbitsky's resignation. When that happens there will almost certainly be a shift from cultural to political nationalism. And in the Ukraine such a movement would be more dangerous than in the Baltics. Here, where the Communist Party was purged of reformers only a decade ago, there are few Communist officials positioned to do what Baltic officials have done: join a nationalist movement and serve as a moderating influence. The Ukraine is fertile ground for a real revolt (only last month 60 activists were arrested in Kiev), and a potentially contagious one; the Ukraine has strong historical ties to Poland. One can imagine a chain reaction that would leave Gorbachev facing full blown crises on both the inner and outer peripheries of his empire.

Khrushchev had a clever way of placating the Ukrainians: treat the Ukraine as Moscow's junior partner. Gorbachev would do well to take a leaf out of Nikita's book, and promote more Ukrainians to the Central Committee and the Politburo, which are now overwhelmingly Russian.

IN CENTRAL ASIA, *perestroika* is virtually ignored, and here Gorbachev is likely to keep facing strong resistance to his policies. Whereas the Balts embrace and exploit political and economic reforms, the Central Asians fear change. Their culture is not economically modern, and they receive large government subsidies. Both Party elites and common folk fear being left by *perestroika* to sink or swim. Add to this a long-standing resentment against the culture of their Russian overlords, and you have a quite natural hostility toward Gorbachev. There are three reasons this opposition could pose big problems for him: demographics, Islam, and Afghanistan.

While the Russians are about to become a minority in the U.S.S.R., the 40 million Soviet Muslims (Uzbeks, Kazaks, Azeris, Tadzhiks, Turkomans, and Kirghiz) are by far the fastest growing population in the country. Within a century, assuming present growth rates, the Soviet Union will be predominantly a Muslim country. These trends have given new self-confidence to the peoples of Central Asia, the "land bridge" between the eastern lands of the Soviet empire, where most of the natural resources are located, and its Western metropolis, where political and economic power are based.

The rise of Islam, especially of fundamentalist Islam in neighboring countries, also has long-term implications for the Soviet Union. As Milan Hauner notes in *Afghanistan and the Soviet Union*, the Soviets of Central Asia increasingly use Islamic forms to express their rejection of Russian culture and their misgivings about the Soviet political system. A Party leader from Tadzhikistan warned in 1986 that "Islam exercises a growing influence on our young generation. We must therefore use our legislation more energetically to halt the illegal activity of the clerics."

Although it is too early to assess the impact of the Soviet retreat from Afghanistan, it is bound to have a profound psychological effect on Central Asia's Muslims. For them the lesson is that Islam can defeat the Red Army, that the Suffi can outwit the Commissar. It is always dangerous for an imperial power to lose a war. Last time that happened to Moscow was the Russian-Japanese war of 1904. We know what followed.

THE RISE OF unrest around Russia's periphery has so far overshadowed a no less formidable nationalist challenge, that of the imperial nation itself: the Russians. True, Russian nationalism has been politically less overt and less organized, but it can count on not only a large constituency among the silent majority of the Russian people, but also considerable influence in the Soviet bureaucracy and military.

Russian nationalism has taken on the tormented, introspective tone of an imperial nation about to become a minority. Its spokesmen have been writers such as Vladimir Soloukhin and Valentin Rasputin, their mouthpieces journals such as *Maladaia Guardia* and *Nash Sovremenik*. In these pages Russia is depicted as dying under the combined effects of modernization, secularization, and Westernization, all of which are associated with communism, especially in its reformist, Gorbachevite guise. Russian nationalists abhor the resulting threat to the traditional values embodied in the Russian village and the Orthodox Church. At the same time, some Russians resent the many "ungrateful" nationalities who have become part of the Soviet empire, and may profit from it, yet complain about it.

During the Brezhnev era the emphasis of Russian nationalists was primarily on cultural nationalism and the development of associations such as Pamiat (Memory) for the preservation of the environment, of historical monuments, etc. But under Gorbachev, Pamiat has taken an increasingly strong stance in defense of an allegedly threatened Russian identity. This means identifying more clearly the nature of the threat, namely the "Judeo-Masonic conspiracy." "There exists a powerful, determined, evil, and clandestine force for the purpose of the destruction of Russia," writes Vasilii Belov in his last novel, published in 1987. He then proceeds to expose the Masonic plot and provide a personal interpretation of *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion*. His book was published in 2.5 million copies. According to the nationalists, Gorbachev is a tool of the conspiracy; some of the leading "Gorbachevite" intellectuals are either Jewish (the playwright Mikhail Shatrov) or non-Russian (Abel Aganbegyan, the economic adviser, who is of Armenian descent).

The resurgence of right-wing Russian nationalism, with its traditional anti-Semitic and xenophobic component, is

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the byproduct of the collapse of Marxist ideology and the simultaneous shock of changes associated with Gorbachev. The introduction of *perestroika* and *glasnost* revived the 19th-century debate between the Slavophiles and the Westernizers. Contemporary nationalist essayists should be read in parallel with the most articulate of the great Russian Slavophiles, Dostoyevsky. In his 1881 essay "What is Asia to us?" he advocates that Russia turn inward, to the vast, unspoiled northeast: Siberia as the salvation of Russia. In contrast to this long-standing school stand Gorbachevites such as Alexander Yakovlev and even liberal dissidents such as Andrei Sakharov, who see all nationalisms as a threat to Soviet modernization and Westernization.

The issue of Russian nationalism has helped crystallize the two main coalitions in Soviet politics today. The anti-*perestroika* coalition consists of Russian nationalists and neo-Stalinists (only last month a letter in *Pravda* signed by Russian nationalists and Party conservatives criticized the excesses of *glasnost*). The pro-*perestroika* coalition consists of Gorbachevites (or neo-Leninists) and liberal intellectuals (such as Sakharov), both committed to a supranational ideology. However, the contest may ultimately be decided by a third party: the various other nationalist movements on the Soviet periphery, which often profess to support *glasnost* but in fact play into the hands of reactionaries by vividly illustrating its dangers.

Gorbachev is now squeezed between the simultaneous rise of two nationalisms: that of the Russians and that of their subjects. To make concessions to the demands of either side is to strengthen both sides. And *glasnost*, an integral part of *perestroika*, ensures the growth of such demands. After four years in office, Gorbachev has discovered that the reform of the Soviet system and the stability of the Soviet empire are incompatible. Faced with that dilemma, he will doubtless be aware that (to paraphrase Churchill) he has not been appointed Soviet leader to preside over the liquidation of the empire.

POSTCARD ESTONIA

CANDLES IN THE WIND

BY LIZ HASSE

Tallinn, Estonia

"Eestigeel, eestimaal, eestirahvas" (Estonian language, Estonian land, Estonian people) was the refrain. Everyone moved briskly and quietly in the direction of the singing. It was dark, and as we rounded the last curve of the cobblestone street, we saw thousands of Estonian faces lit by candle and torch light. The town square could not hold another soul, yet more and more Estonians arrived and folded into the crowd—mothers and young children, fathers carrying babies, couples, groups of teens—many dressed in blue, black, and white, the colors of the striped Estonian flag that here and there fluttered above the crowd.

The celebration was the culmination of Estonian language week. This gathering was not as big as that of the 300,000 supporters who had convened in September on Tallinn's festival grounds to celebrate the newly voiced support by Estonian leaders in the Communist Party for the Popular Front movement. Nonetheless, this demonstration resembled the larger one in many ways: again, song was the expression; the mood, a spirited calm; sovereignty was again the theme—this time the emphasis was on preserving an Estonian language and cultural heritage. One of the speakers was Heins Valk, artist, political cartoonist, and Popular Front activist. Standing on the steps of Tallinn's 13th-century city hall, he reminded the group that theirs was a 5,000-year-old language, a 5,000-year-old culture. "Anyone who kills a culture kills himself," he said.

ESTONIA, like its Baltic neighbors, Latvia and Lithuania, has been occupied by the Soviet Union since the notorious 1939 Hitler-Stalin (Ribbentrop-Molotov) pact. Its population was about 95 percent Estonian when it was "given" to the Soviets. Now the country is about 40 percent Russian, with some cities and industrial regions reaching 80 percent. The massive migration has been due both to the high standard of living here and the Soviet government's concerted efforts to make the most of the region's resources. Estonia has the largest phosphorus mines in all of the Soviet Union and extensive brown coal deposits. All this mineral wealth led the central government to build block after block of uniform, styleless concrete apartment buildings to entice Russians to move and work here. It was hard for me to believe that this massive development of dreary structures had such drawing power. But, I was told, because of the shortage of apartments in the central Soviet Union and the fact that those in Estonia are equipped with relatively modern fixtures, the migration continues.

Tallinn, the Estonian capital, is an example. The population is over 300,000. The center is a lovely, largely unaltered medieval city of narrow cobblestone streets, red-tiled roofs, and distinctive Gothic, Romanesque, and Eastern Orthodox spires. Beyond lies the port on the Finnish gulf. About 100,000 people live within and around the old city walls in medieval houses and studios, in Stalinesque columned buildings, in apartment buildings ranging from the plain to the stately. Just 20 minutes away by public transportation lies the Lasmanäe, where the other 200,000 inhabitants live in workers' apartment blocks built (and still being built) over the remnants of Estonian settlements that are thousands of years old. The apartment blocks stand uninterrupted—no grass, no parks. One food store services the entire 200,000.

Liz Hasse is a lawyer in San Francisco who recently traveled to Estonia.

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Mostly Russians live here, with a sprinkling of Estonians. In the primary and secondary schools of the Lasmanäe, either Estonian or Russian may be spoken. Until recently those who spoke Russian were required to learn Estonian, and vice versa. But the Estonian language requirement was rarely enforced. That may be changing. In January the Estonian Parliament adopted a controversial law making Estonian the sole official language.

What the Estonians have resented even more than the requirement that their children learn the language of the occupiers is what they regard as the plunder of their homeland. There has been no effort by the Soviet government to pace the mining, to save resources for future generations. Driving along Estonia's northernmost route, a road that runs the 400 kilometers from Tallinn on the northwest coast east to Narva at the Soviet-Estonian "border," one sees the silhouettes of grand, single mountains. But these are not mountains; they are piles of ash from brown coal processing.

EESTIGEEL, eestimaal, eestirahvas is not just a refrain; it's a three-point program. Popular Front leaders and lawyers working on new provisions to the Estonian constitution explained to me that the aims of the independence movement are (1) to secure the priority of the Estonian language and thus to preserve and restore the rapidly disappearing Estonian culture; (2) to establish pollution controls and an ecologically sound plan for growth; and (3) to limit the influx of Russians.

When the Russians first took over Estonia, they deported large portions of its population to Siberia, particularly people who lived near borders that afforded the chance to escape. Until last year any travel by Estonians to the Baltic islands just off their northern and western coasts was severely restricted. Some of the islands, farming communities before the occupation, are now deserted.

I accompanied Mark Soosaar, filmmaker and president of the Estonian Filmmakers Union, on a trip to Saaremaa Island. We took the half-hour ferry ride to Muhu Island, then drove across a narrow dam that connects it to Saaremaa, then continued to the peninsula at the island's western end. There lives Uba Hermann, Estonia's last beauty queen and the central figure in Soosaar's latest documentary. She is 81 years old. She was crowned beauty queen in 1931. After that she was a cook aboard ships and for people in high places, including Brezhnev and Khrushchev. Now she keeps up her own house, barn, and smokehouse, grows flowers and vegetables, rides her bike daily to the market, and raises two massive pigs, named Brezhnev and Khrushchev. She tells Soosaar that Brezhnev will be eaten for Easter, Khrushchev for Christmas. The lively and tiny Uba tells her stories without any obvious bitterness or drama. She punctuates her tales with shakes of the head about the foibles of leaders and of humans in general. This year, after a 57-year hiatus, an Estonian beauty contest will be held once again. Hermann was asked to be a member of the jury and eagerly accepted the invitation. This is supposed to mark some kind of progress.

There were other signs of progress, of *glasnost*, while I was there. One day an Estonian film critic returned to the Filmmakers Union to announce that he had bought an *International Herald Tribune*, the first Western paper to become generally available. *Wall Street* was showing in the Tallinn movie theater. Finnish TV showed that another movie was getting a lot of attention elsewhere in the country. Banned in the center of Moscow, but attracting millions of viewers in its environs, *Little Vera*, directed by 28-year-old Vasily Pichul, is the first publicly distributed Soviet feature film to show "sex, drugs, and rock 'n' roll" in ordinary life. Natasha Nagoda plays the teenage Vera, who attempts suicide with pills, dodges her father's drunken outbursts, and appears bare-breasted in a love scene.

Musicians and artists are the leaders of the Estonian Popular Front, claims Yakovlev, Gorbachev's chief adviser on ideology. There is a certain truth to this. Before the independence movement became so vocal and public, it was the artists and filmmakers who preserved and communicated ideas and images of Estonian culture and independence. But the Popular Front is not, as Yakovlev wanted to say, an elitist organization. It boasts 60,000 registered members and at least six times that many unfaltering supporters. The members are from grass-roots democratic organizations throughout the republic. What gives the movement its intellectual look is the fact that Estonians are, as a group, more highly educated than most other Soviets—and the contrast with the Russian mineworkers who have moved here by the tens of thousands is especially stark.

I MET AT LENGTH with two Popular Front lawyers. They disagreed over a number of points: how the relationship between the central Soviet government and the Estonian Republic should be formulated; to what extent the Soviet Union should continue to be the seat of diplomatic relations and military power. These are issues they and other Estonians will continue to work out (if—and it is a very big if—Estonia gets the chance), item by item, guided by excited and thoughtful thinkers. Right now this is Estonian language week, and Estonian language is a priority. And everyone at this 12,000-plus demonstration seems to agree.

The singing stopped, and we followed the people out of the square as they conversed in bunches of three and four. Along the street I saw single candles burning where Estonians had left them—on window ledges, in a phone booth, on a park bench. Part of the group moved to a nearby park, to the statue of Anton Hansen-Tammasaare, Estonia's most important early-20th-century novelist. I set my burning candle alongside hundreds of others at the statue's pedestal. My Estonian companion told me that in 1980 this statue had been, as it was tonight, the site for independence demonstrations. But back then the police had arrived, taken pictures, and later arrested some of the participants. No police were visible this time. Maybe *glasnost* is for real. Or maybe the authorities thought that if they ignored the demonstration, it didn't exist. □

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STANLEY KAUFFMANN ON FILMS

The Return of El Aurans

A boon. *Lawrence of Arabia* has been reissued, restored to its original length.

The first version, supervised by the director, David Lean, ran 222 minutes—plus intermission. Shortly after the premiere in 1962, it was cut to 202 minutes, for quicker turnover in theaters. When it was reissued in 1971, it was cut to 187 minutes. Now, under the hands of

Lawrence of Arabia
(Columbia)

Robert A. Harris and Jim Painten, the excised bits have been found, refurbished, and restored, and the whole sound track redone in Dolby six-track process.

That track, welcome though it is, underscores an incorrigible flaw, the music. Maurice Jarre's theme, with a few lesser themes once in a while, is lushly effective five or six times and then becomes a liability. But the restoration does very well by F. A. Young's Panavision camera. At first the color registry may seem a bit pallid after the soupiness of the last quarter century, but in a few minutes our eyes adjust to Young's calibration and the film looks simultaneously subtle and gorgeous.

The actors are an astonishment. Alec Guinness as Prince Feisal, Anthony Quinn (hawk-nosed) as Auda Abu Tayi, Jack Hawkins as General Allenby, José Ferrer (at his best) as the Turkish Bey, Omar Sharif (at *his* best) as Sherif Ali, Anthony Quayle (the best Falstaff I've ever seen) as the beefy Colonel Brighton, Donald Wolfit (the best Lear I've ever seen) as the rotund General Murray, Arthur Kennedy (the one American) as the correspondent based on Lowell Thomas, and blessed Claude Rains as the diplomat Dryden . . . the roster is hardly credible. Lawrence, of course, is Peter O'Toole, at the age of 28.

To see O'Toole as Lawrence now is to see a different Lawrence, because when this film was first seen, O'Toole was new. He had played a couple of small film parts, but in effect this was his screen debut. A few years earlier in London, I had been urged to visit Stratford to see this rising young actor as Shylock. I was unable to go but wondered about the young man who could do that role and win the praise of trustworthy people, so I had a special interest in seeing his Lawrence. How sorry I was (am) that I missed the Shylock. His performance in the film was an arrival. Today we see it through the perspective of his stardom and what he has done since; today it seems even more delicate, complex, and because of subsequent professional caprice, somewhat sad.

O'Toole goes straight for the contradictions: the cultivated man who loves the company of desert warriors, the sensitive man who is adept at war, the heroic man—probably the most famous hero of the First World War—who has a clear touch of the feminine. (This is a quite different matter from Lawrence's alleged homosexuality, which is hinted throughout.)

O'Toole's action scenes, including the battles, are carried off with a size that implicates the desert, the vast vast desert, as the source of his gestures. Here the Arabs call him El Aurans, and the Arabic transmutation of his name fits the double man. The desert, O'Toole convinces us, is the place where this man can both lose and find himself. The actual Lawrence was short; O'Toole is not, but he makes height irrelevant in a place so large that this man, whatever the petty details of his height, would get drunk on sky.

And O'Toole is excellent in the inner drama that is a counterpoint to the drama with others. Fairly early in the film, for instance, Lawrence himself has to execute an Arab tribesman who murdered a man from another tribe. When he returns to Cairo, he informs General Allenby that he won't return to the desert and tells him of the execution. Allenby reassures him about wartime necessities, and Lawrence keeps saying that there is more to it. At last, pressed by Allenby, Lawrence admits his real repugnance about the execution: "I enjoyed it." This brief scene calls for an actor who can sound about six notes in every line. O'Toole is overwhelming.

The dialogue is by Robert Bolt, the gifted English playwright. (Though Bolt has always had sole screen credit, it's well known that a first screenplay was written by the American Michael Wilson.) The dialogue throughout is exceptional, worthy to be spoken by this cast. The screenplay's trouble is its zigzag structure in Part Two. Several times Lawrence says he's withdrawing from the desert war, for differing reasons, yet goes back. The author(s) of the screenplay didn't find a way to follow historical fact and yet make these shifts part of a driving cumulative dramatic action. Especially since these flutterings of momentum come after some two hours of film, Lawrence's irresolution leaks over from his life into the course of the film as such.

But what we look at and what we hear never falter irreparably. David Lean has had no experience in the theater, so it

FILMS WORTH SEEING

Dirty Rotten Scoundrels. For Michael Caine collectors (like me). Despite Steve Martin, Caine's syrup as a Riviera con man is soothing—and delightful. (Reviewed 1/30/89)

Pelle the Conqueror. A long, substantial chronicle of a boy's growth on a Danish farm, c. 1890. Rich texture, fine acting—especially the wondrous Max von Sydow as Pelle's father. (1/23/89)

36 Fillette. The title is a French dress size. A voluptuous 14-year-old girl's sexual adventures with an older man. Catherine Breillat, who wrote and directed, is concerned with quandaries, not exploitation. (2/6/89)

True Believer. Neat, clever small thriller—good screenplay by Wesley Strick—about a New York lawyer who recovers his liberal beliefs by fighting for a convict's rights. (2/13/89)

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may seem surprising that he is not only a fine director of acting but that he uses his actors, in a precise sense, theatrically. This surely has much to do with the fact that he began directing as Noel Coward's collaborator on *In Which We Serve* and that his first three solo films were of Coward plays, with the author often on hand. He has said that Coward "taught me more about directing actors than anyone else."

Lean's cinematic vision is first revealed in the way he uses the Moorish palaces that serve as British headquarters and officers' clubs. (Most of the film's two-year shooting schedule was spent in Jordan and Morocco.) As for Lean's vision of the desert, it is now one of the givens of cinema history. He introduces the desert with a famous, unforgettable cut. Lawrence, in a Cairo office, is eager to set out for the desert. He lifts a match to blow it out—in close-up, in Panavision—and he blows away instantaneously the frame itself, which is replaced by a limitless desert panorama. The close-up head and hand are replaced by immensity. Seconds later—it seems minutes—we discern two tiny camel riders making their way leftward in the distance. Lawrence and his Arab guide are on those camels, as we soon discover, and we are with them, are in the desert with them as thoroughly as we have ever been in any place in any film.

The ways in which Lean sees these vistas are so apt through the film, so intrinsic, that they can hardly be called ingenious: it's almost as if the landscape were evoking these aspects of itself. The place is prodigal with opportunities, and Lean combines that prodigality with an exquisite sense of selection, to pour his hundreds of actors through just that rock defile or over just that sand ridge, to use whole camps with dozens of tents so as to emphasize the horizon beyond them. Lean also has humor. Part Two begins with another shot of a ridge of sand against the sky, and we expect more horsemen or camel troops to ride toward us. Instead, across comes Kennedy in fedora, suit, shirt and tie, struggling with the sand and adding a new element to the story.

The passage of time has not worn away the mastery of Lean and his colleagues, it has burnished *Lawrence*, transformed it. The film is no longer only a rendering of biographical materials, it is an entity in itself. When it was first released and in the years following, many (myself included) faulted it for its incomplete portrait of its hero. After the Arabian exploits, the film finishes (quite abruptly). There is no hint of his subsequent life, his role at the Paris Peace Conference, his re-enlistments in the army as a private, his literary accomplishments, his friendship with the literary greats. (Ironic note. The film opens with the motorcycle accident that killed him in 1935; the motorcycle was a gift from Bernard Shaw and his wife.) None of these omissions seems germane any longer. Perhaps the feebleness of most comparable efforts since then has heightened the film's stature or perhaps it's simply that we now know what the film's compass is and expect no more of it than what is in it; in any case, what there is here of Lawrence is so well treated that charges of incompleteness seem almost irrelevant.

Lawrence now seems no more of a diminution than do many classic historical plays. Like those plays in at least one respect, the film is a separate entity, existing in its own medium with enough force to make complete historical correlation quite secondary. Lean and the producer Sam Spiegel and their two screenwriters chose enough of the facts to support the story they wanted

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to tell. Obviously this is a risky procedure, which has to be justified by the results. In the film world, and elsewhere, it doesn't often succeed. With *Lawrence*, it does.

The faults of the film now seem much less historical than intrinsic, and they are all in the screenplay. It is insufficiently firm right through to the end. But it is good enough to enable the makers, Lean and O'Toole at their head, to create a near masterpiece. To sit through the almost four hours of *Lawrence* is to revel in film—in some of film's powers used at their best.

What the Soviets are saying about the writers they are resurrecting.

THE GLASNOST PAPERS

I
DARKNESS AT NOON
BY ARTHUR KOESTLER

The following essay appeared as a preface to the Russian edition of Arthur Koestler's Darkness at Noon, *which was published for the first time in the Soviet Union in the Leningrad literary magazine* Neva, *beginning with its issue # 7, July 1988.*

The author of *Darkness at Noon* was once a familiar name to Soviet readers. In the summer of 1937, the Molodaya Gvardia [Young Guard] press published his book *Unheard-of Sacrifices* [part of *Spanish Testament*], an account of atrocities committed by Franco's forces on Spanish territory captured in the early months of the Fascist rebellion. The publisher's preface mentioned that Koestler, then a correspondent for the English leftist-bourgeois *News Chronicle*, had meritoriously earned the hatred of the Francoists on the strength of his anti-Fascist publications. When Malaga fell to the Fascists, he was arrested and sentenced to death, and it was only through the intercession of foreign diplomats and the protests of international public opinion that he escaped execution. One might have added that Koestler was a Communist at the time, and a widely experienced journalist who had even visited the Soviet Union. A year later, the magazine *Internatsionalnaya Literatura* [International Literature] reported that a new anti-Fascist book by Koestler, *Spanish Testament*, had appeared in London.

But Koestler's dialogue with the Soviet reader was soon nipped in the bud. The reason was the appearance in 1940 of the very novel that *Neva* begins publishing in this issue. Since *Darkness at Noon* dealt with unlawful actions engendered by Stalin's cult of personality, the novel and its author were relegated to the category of anti-Soviet literature, and thus removed from our cultural life. The fact that the novel achieved wide popularity, and was translated into 30 languages, made it particularly harmful in the eyes of our ideological overseers. Ever since, Koestler's name has generally been consigned to oblivion; whenever it has been mentioned in some book or article, the context has always been negative, in connection with some discreditable "revelation."

I shall not attempt an overall evaluation of Koestler's complex, multifaceted literary and scientific legacy (he was a philosopher, psychologist, and biologist, as well as a writer), particularly since it still awaits objective analysis in our country. I shall take the liberty of asserting, however, that a work such as *Darkness at Noon* does deserve, at the very least, to be included, at long last, within the range of books that Soviet people read.

Only the guilty conscience of Stalin and his henchmen, and the dogmatic myopia of their spiritual heirs, could have branded as anti-Soviet a work of such outstanding artistic merit. For the novel was not a product of hostility to the Soviet Union, nor of a desire to arouse hatred and repugnance toward it. Totally different feelings prompted it: pain, compassion, despair. Plus a passionate desire to grasp the meaning of what had occurred in the land of socialist revolution, which Koestler had formerly been so enthusiastic about.

The direct cause of his spiritual drama (the term I consider appropriate for what Koestler experienced in the late 1930s, for what prompted him to write this novel) was the Moscow trials of 1936-1938. Those trials were merely the apex of a gigantic pyramid of repressions whose scope and direction seemed so monstrous, so senseless. There seemed to be no explanation for the zeal with which the victims of the trials—venerable revolutionaries, Lenin's oldest and most intimate associates—vilified themselves in confessing to their alleged heinous crimes. The nature of the trials baffled many members of the progressive community abroad, including Communists (and, naturally, many Soviet citizens).

But let us try to imagine the time. The almost palpable approach of a new war. The audaciously aggressive behavior of the Fascist powers. The feverish attempts to create a battle-ready alliance of anti-Fascist forces. And the belief that the U.S.S.R. was the most dependable—if not the sole—bulwark in the struggle against Fascism. Under those circumstances, the alarming and incomprehensible news from Moscow confronted friends of the Soviet Union with a terrible dilemma. Either they had to accept on faith the official account of spies and enemies of the people invading every cell of the Soviet organism, and, if worst came to worst, temporarily put aside their doubts and defend that account; or else they had to take a stand against it and, like it or not, break with their former like-minded comrades engaged in the struggle. There was no other choice. In those days, after all, any comment critical of the Soviet Union was interpreted in this country as a hostile act, with all the ensuing consequences—in keeping with a well-known slogan that did us much harm, "He who is not with

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Barry Rubin, who has translated all of these articles, is on the faculty of Queens College, CUNY, and is the translator of Lydia Chukovskaya's memoir of Anna Akhmatova, forthcoming from Farrar, Straus & Giroux.

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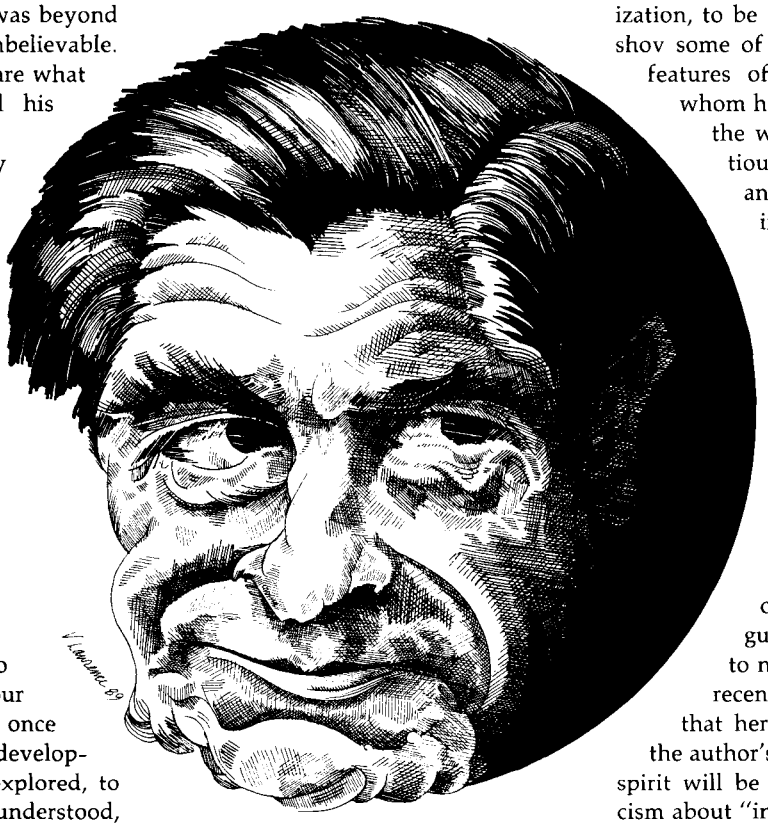
us is against us." We ourselves spurned even well-wishing critics, and reclassified them as the enemy.

Of the two alternatives mentioned, Koestler chose the second. As a result, he parted ways forever with Communists, and was thrust by the logic of things into the liberal-bourgeois camp. It is regrettable that we lost this talented comrade-in-arms (and not him alone, unfortunately). But now it is hardly worthwhile to condemn or to justify his actions. The shock was too powerful for him, and no practical considerations could neutralize that shock. The artist and thinker in him was stronger than the politician and pragmatist. It was beyond his power to believe in the unbelievable. Those traits of his character are what may well have determined his destiny.

As far back as a half century ago, in an attempt, while the tracks were still fresh, to get to the bottom of the events that had shaken him, Koestler presented a convincing artistic version of the circumstances that had led to the arrest, the false self-denunciation, and the execution of certain members of the Old Bolshevik guard. It is precisely this attempt that makes his book interesting, valuable, and essential for us today. For we, too, seek to fathom the meaning of our country's contradictory—at once heroic and tragic—historical development, to investigate the unexplored, to understand what is not yet understood, to reveal what for many years has been a secret. In our attempt to arrive at the truth, books like *Darkness at Noon* can help.

There is no great harm in the fact that before us is a work of fiction rather than a historical treatise. The moans and cries of indignation we keep hearing these days about impatient writers who, unwilling to wait for dilatory historians, have usurped the right to illuminate our recent past, and in so doing have distorted and confused things—all these moans and cries, if they are completely honest and not merely a screen for ulterior motives, are based on a misconception. They stem from a failure to grasp the fact that science and art have an equal right to achieve an understanding of reality—of today, of yesterday, of the day before yesterday. There can be no monopoly in this, just as there can be no rivalry. Science and art supplement each other. And in certain areas, above all in the analysis of human psychology, art is capable of yielding more than science. That's axiomatic, one would think.

What, then, is at issue? It is not my intention to engage in a detailed analysis of *Darkness at Noon*. First it should have a chance to reach the reader. Critical analysis will come later, if it is necessary. There is sufficient material for it. I shall limit myself to a few introductory remarks.



First of all, I would like to address those who insist that works of fiction be as absolutely precise in their facts and details as scientific writings. One should not look for this kind of precision in *Darkness at Noon*. From the very start, of course, it is quite obvious where the events in the novel take place. The characters have Russian names (or names that the author considers Russian). But it is certainly not by chance that Koestler never precisely specifies the location of the action; that he never directly identifies either the country, the city, or any historical figures. In referring to historical events he consciously takes many liberties.

Repeated mention is made, for instance, of the first congress of the Party, at which all its founders were present and recorded in a photograph, including the man who subsequently seized power and began to liquidate his former comrades-in-arms. No such congress ever took place. The tasks supposedly carried out abroad by the novel's hero in ousting various types of "deviationists" from the Party ranks are also an invention. The specifics of prison conditions, the interrogations, and so on, are fictitious. Finally, there never was any person in reality whose biography matched the one that the author gave his hero, Nicolas Rubashov. In creating the characterization, to be sure, Koestler gave Rubashov some of the external and internal features of certain Old Bolsheviks whom he knew personally. But on the whole Rubashov is a fictitious and collective figure, and there is no use looking for his prototype. The same is true of other characters in the novel.

Consequently, anyone who thinks that he can find here a description of the true course of the historical process will inevitably end up making a fool of himself. This word of warning is necessary because the reaction of some readers (distinguished as well as ordinary) to novels and plays about our recent history makes one fear that here, too, disagreement with the author's anti-Stalinist, anti-cultist spirit will be cloaked in captious criticism about "inaccuracies" and "errors of fact." In order to increase the novel's general applicability, Koestler, who had an excellent knowledge of the historical facts, intentionally resorted to inventions, simplifications, "inaccuracies." He was, after all, an artist.

But facts are not the only issue. It would be equally illegitimate to take as an authentic representation of reality all the discourse in the novel having to do with the premises and the reasons for sanctioning personal dictatorship, and with the real motives behind repression. These arguments contain a good many profound and subtle ideas that at times anticipate our present-day understanding of those problems. But when reading the novel one should not for a single moment forget that the person present-

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ing the arguments is trying to convince himself (and ultimately succeeds) that he is obliged to carry out his "last task for the Party," to slander himself and die as an "enemy of the people," hated and despised by all. To convince himself that such a terrible death is necessary, he has to acknowledge the inevitability of what has happened in the Party and in the country. He must take the side of historical fatalism. And thus he cannot do without sophistry and distortion. Evidently, similar conclusions were arrived at, from different motives, by the author himself. That was the basis, I reiterate, of his own spiritual drama. A comparable fatalism led the novel's hero to his death and brought about the writer's disillusionment with Marxism. Engaging in polemics with him now would be like kicking at open doors.

In spite of everything, we shall prove capable of understanding, I think, that the existence of objective conditions for a phenomenon (in this instance, for the cult of personality and everything associated with it) does not by any means preclude an alternative, or the possibility of choice; and that the building of socialism, even in a backward country, did not by any means predetermine the certainty and the inevitability of the triumph of Stalinism, with its sinister methods of government and its idolatrous mode of thought.

Taking into account all of the above, one can appreciate the abiding value of Koestler's novel: a powerful artistic reconstruction of the oppressive and pernicious cult-of-personality atmosphere that warped men's souls, engendered mutual suspicion, mistrust, and "witch-hunts," destroyed normal human bonds, fostered arbitrary rule and lawlessness. An atmosphere that a thousand times over reproduced a situation wherein our country's finest people perished, and were slandered and defamed for a half century thereafter. What Koestler was able to guess and to portray, with his artistic flair, is merely a part of an enormous picture painted in blood and tears. Its most humane part, perhaps, if such a term is appropriate here. What he portrayed was only one of the diabolical methods, and not even the cruelest method, employed during the Stalinist Terror for the moral and physical destruction of the human personality.

It has long been known, however, that the whole is reflected in its parts.

V. CHUBINSKY

II
DOCTOR ZHIVAGO
BY BORIS PASTERNAK

Novy Mir *rejected* Doctor Zhivago *in 1956 and ran this explanation from the editors two years later, in November 1958, when Pasternak was awarded the Nobel Prize: "The spirit of your novel is the spirit of rejection of the Socialist Revolution. . . . The author's views on the past of our country . . . can be summed up as meaning that the October Revolution was a mistake, that participation in it for that part of the intelligentsia who supported it was an irreparable calamity, and that everything that took place after it was an evil. . . . Your novel is unjust; it does not give a historically objective presentation of the revolution, the civil war, and the post-Revolution years; it is deeply anti-democratic and devoid of any understanding whatsoever of the interests of the people. . . . As our views are directly opposed to yours, we cannot even consider the publication of your novel in the magazine* Novy Mir. *" More than 30 years later,* Novy Mir *began publication of* Doctor Zhivago *in its January 1988 issue, accompanied by this introduction by the renowned literary scholar and eminent authority on Old Russian literature, Dmitri Likhachov. As a boy, Likhachov witnessed the brutality of the Russian civil war that is so central in Pasternak's novel, and during the late 1920s he spent several years in an infamous prison camp for his writing. Recently Likhachov has been in the forefront of efforts to preserve Russian culture and to promote the publication of suppressed works of literature.*

Whenever I read *Doctor Zhivago* I never cease to be amazed. If it were written in an altogether new and different manner, Pasternak's novel would be more understandable. But in form and language it seems conventional and firmly rooted, in conformity with the traditions of the 19th-century Russian novel. This kinship between *Doctor Zhivago* and the classical form of the novel makes us continually slip into a rut, hunting for what isn't there in the work and regarding what is there from a traditional perspective: looking for direct appraisals of events, seeing a prosaic rather than a poetic attitude toward reality, discovering behind descriptions of calamities a condemnation of whatever gave rise to them.

At the same time, *Doctor Zhivago* is not even a novel. What we have here is a particular kind of autobiography—one in which external facts corresponding to the author's actual life are quite surprisingly absent. The novel's central figure, Dr. Yurii Andreievich Zhivago, refracted through the demands customarily made on novels, seems pale and anemic, and his poems seem an unjustifiable appendage, artificial and beside the point. And yet the author (Pasternak) is writing about himself—viewed as a stranger. He contrives for himself a destiny that will enable him to reveal his inner life most fully to the reader.

Pasternak's real life did not afford him an opportunity to convey the full burden of his position between the two camps of the revolution, which he depicts so remarkably in a battle scene between the partisans and the White army quoted some time ago in the Soviet press (*Novy Mir*, November, 1958). Though technically neutral, he—that is, the hero of the work, Dr. Zhivago—is drawn into the battle on the side of the Reds. . . .

WHY DID Pasternak have a need for "someone else" to express his own feelings, a need for imagined situations he himself had never known? . . . Self-expression at its most precise is a property of lyric poetry. The lyric hero, invented and placed at a remove, is truly a poet's most adequate, most lucid, form of self-expression. The poet is not writing about himself, yet at the same time it is precisely about himself that he is writing. He can place his lyric hero in an invented situation, make him older or younger than himself, endow him, in the end, with feelings not personally experienced. But it will still be the poet himself through the medium of someone else. And it is wrong to think that a poet, if he writes in the first person, invariably has only himself in mind. Yes, a poet writes about himself too, but he reveals his spiritual self, his poetic self, not necessarily through the real events and circumstances of his own life. Conversely, a poet can write in the third person but about himself. Man is endowed with an astonishing capacity for self-objectification, but that objectification is simultaneously a capacity for embodying his thoughts and feelings, his attitude toward his milieu, in the person of someone else. . . .

Yurii Andreievich Zhivago is Pasternak's lyric hero; and Pasternak remains a lyric poet even in his prose fiction. My view of *Doctor Zhivago* as Pasternak's own lyric confession is substantiated by the fact that Yurii Zhivago, like Pasternak himself, is a poet, and his poems are appended to the novel. This is not incidental. Zhivago's poems are Pasternak's poems. They are written on behalf of one person; they have one author and one lyric hero. . . .

Zhivago is the spokesman of the innermost Pasternak. It is not hard to be con-

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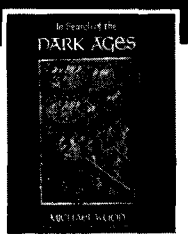

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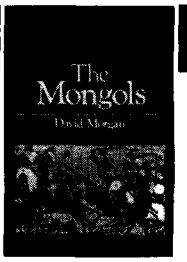

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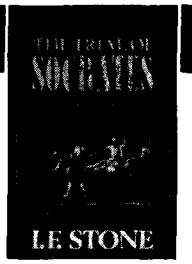

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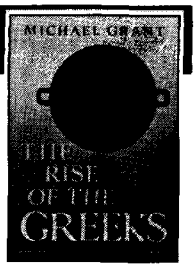

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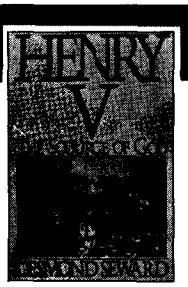

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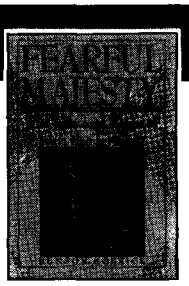

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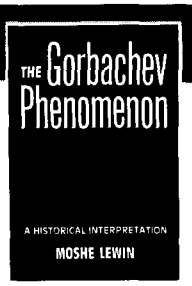

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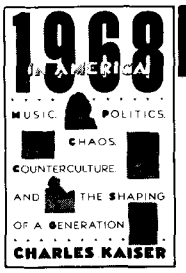

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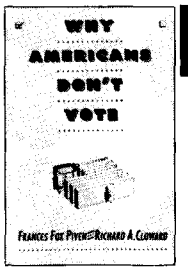

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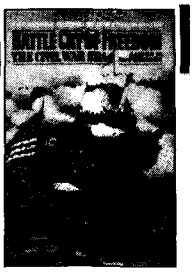
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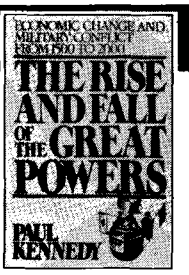

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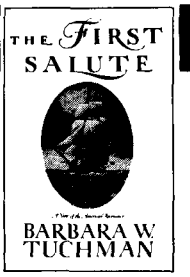

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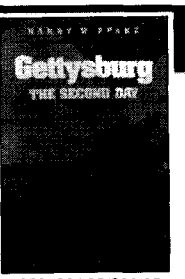

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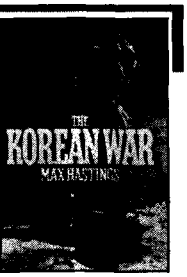

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vinced of that. In previous introductions to a volume of Pasternak's lyric prose and to a two-volume edition of both poetry and prose, I wrote that in Pasternak an image sometimes overpowers the reality that prompted it. . . . And surely the very same thing happens in Pasternak's magnum opus, *Doctor Zhivago*. The image of Zhivago—Pasternak's own emanation—becomes something larger than Pasternak himself. Pasternak develops his own self; out of Yurii Zhivago he creates an exponent of the Russian intelligentsia that accepted the revolution, but not without vacillations and not without spiritual losses. Zhivago-Pasternak accepts the world no matter how pitiless it may be at the moment.

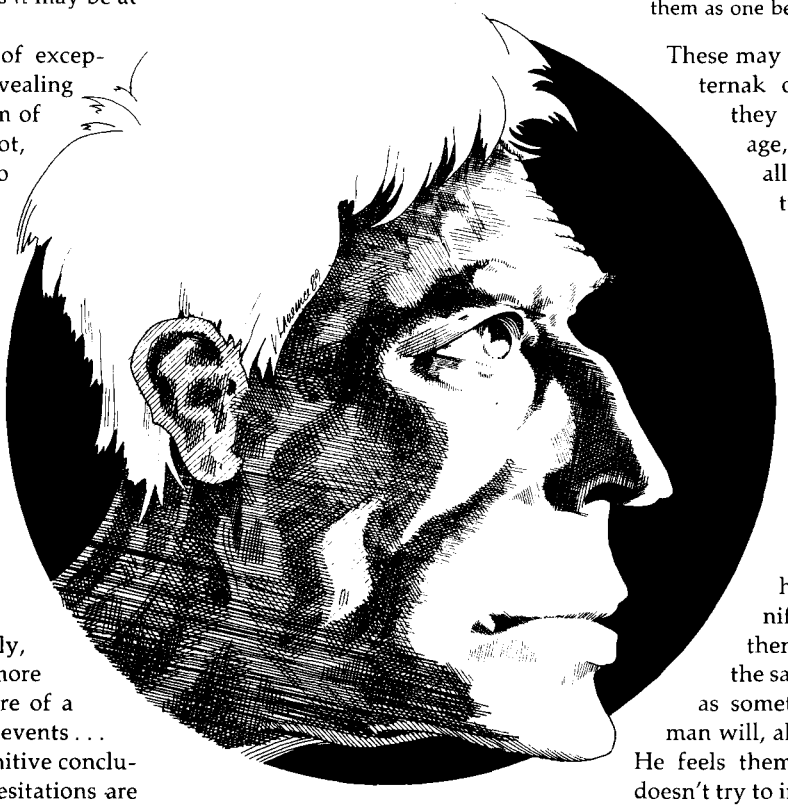
One more circumstance of exceptional importance: in revealing himself through the medium of someone with a different lot, Pasternak makes no effort to convince the reader that his own opinions, his own hesitations, are correct. Zhivago does not challenge the reader's convictions at all. But this would not be the case if Pasternak were manifestly talking about himself. The reader would think that an attempt was being made to win him over, to persuade him—that he was being urged to share views. . . .

And what is there, basically, to share? Zhivago has more hesitations and doubts, more of a lyric, poetic attitude toward events . . . than clear answers and definitive conclusions. For Zhivago, these hesitations are not a weakness; they constitute his intellectual and moral strength. He has no will, if by will we mean the capacity to make unequivocal, unwavering decisions. But he does have the spiritual resolve not to yield to the temptation of unequivocal decisions that relieve one of doubts.

Zhivago is an individual who was meant, it seems, to be fully sensible of his era without intervening in it. The prime mover of the novel is the elemental force of revolution. The protagonist himself does not affect it, or even try to affect it. He does not intervene in the course of events and he serves those to whom he falls captive. . . .

Here there is a difference between the author and his hero. By no means does Pasternak himself lack will, of course; creativity requires a tremendous effort of will. Nor is he neutral, inasmuch as the depiction of an era is intervention in life. Perhaps Zhivago, for that matter, lacks will not in all respects, but only in one: in his sense of the immensity of events, independent of his will, which bear him up and sweep over the whole earth.

The figure of Yurii Zhivago, whom all of surrounding nature seems to permeate, who reacts to everything deeply and with gratitude (he is, after all, a member of the intelligentsia!), is extremely important, since it is through him, through his relation to his environment, that the



author's own relation to reality is transmitted.

> Ever since his childhood Yurii Andreievich had been fond of woods seen at evening against the setting sun. At such moments he felt as if he too were being pierced by shafts of light. It was as though the gift of the living spirit were streaming into his breast, piercing his being and coming out at his shoulders like a pair of wings.
>
> [translations from *Dr. Zhivago* by Max Hayward and Manya Harari]

The events of the October Revolution enter Yurii Zhivago just as nature itself enters him. . . . What is Russia for Zhivago? It is the entire world around him. Russia, too, is made of contradictions, is full of ambivalence. Zhivago perceives it with a love that causes him transcendent anguish. All alone, Zhivago finds himself in Yuriatin, and here are his extremely important thought-feelings (more feeling than thought):

> A spring evening. The air punctuated with scattered sounds. The voices of children playing in the streets coming from varying distances as if to show that the whole expanse is alive. And this vast expanse is Russia, his incomparable mother; famed far and wide, martyred, stubborn, extravagant, crazy, irresponsible, adored, Russia with her eternally splendid, and disastrous, and unpredictable adventures. Oh, how sweet to be alive! How good to be alive and to love life! Oh, the ever-present longing to thank life, thank existence itself, to thank them as one being to another being!

These may be the words of Boris Pasternak or of Yurii Zhivago, but they blend with Zhivago's image, and in a way they sum up all his wanderings between two camps. The sum of this wandering and going astray (both will-less and unwilled) is a love of Russia, a love of life, a purifying recognition of the inevitability of what is happening.

Does Pasternak ponder the meaning of the historical events of which he serves as witness and describer? Does he consider what they signify and what gave rise to them? Most assuredly. And at the same time he perceives them as something independent of human will, akin to natural phenomena. He feels them, he hears them, but he doesn't try to interpret them logically. He has no wish to give them meaning. To him, they are a given of nature. No one, after all, ever endeavors to make ethical judgments about natural phenomena—about rain, or a thunderstorm, or a blizzard, or a forest in springtime. . . . But historical events have, traditionally, required judgment. . . .

In the person of Lara (a second character who lacks definition, and thus also resembles the author), Pasternak expresses his dislike of naked explanation: "I don't like purely philosophical works. I think a little philosophy should be added to life and art by way of seasoning, but to make it one's specialty seems to me as strange as eating nothing but horseradish." In his novel, Pasternak strictly follows this rule: he doesn't ex-

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plain, he merely shows. Explanations of events expressed by Zhivago-Pasternak are indeed only "seasoning." By and large, Pasternak takes life and history as they are.

TO UNDERSTAND Pasternak's attitude toward events, one particular scene in the novel should be considered. From a newsboy Zhivago buys the special edition of a paper in which he finds the official announcement from Petrograd "that a Soviet of People's Commissars had been formed and that Soviet power and the dictatorship of the proletariat were established in Russia." (The scene occurs at the very moment when the October Revolution is victorious in Moscow.) Zhivago returns home and, warming himself by the stove, he hands the paper to his father-in-law: "Seen that? Have a look." Still squatting on his heels and poking the fire, Yurii Andreievich loudly talks to himself:

> What splendid surgery! [Zhivago is a surgeon; for him, this is the highest praise. D.L.] You take a knife and with one masterful stroke you cut out all of the old stinking ulcers. Quite simply, without any nonsense, you take the old monster of injustice, which has been accustomed for centuries to being bowed and scraped and curtsied to, and you sentence it to death.
>
> This fearlessness, this way of seeing the thing through to the end, has a familiar national look about it. It has something of Pushkin's uncompromising clarity and of Tolstoy's unwavering faithfulness to the facts. . . .
>
> And the real stroke of genius is this. If you charged someone with the task of creating a new world, of starting a new era, he would ask you first to clear the ground. He would wait for the old centuries to finish before undertaking to build the new ones, he'd want to begin a new paragraph, a new page.
>
> But here, they don't bother with anything like that. This new thing, this marvel of history, this revelation, is exploded right into the very thick of daily life without the slightest consideration for its course. It doesn't start at the beginning, it starts in the middle, without any schedule, on the first weekday that comes along, while the traffic in the street is at its height. That's real genius. Only real greatness can be so unconcerned with timing and opportunity.

These words are perhaps the key to Pasternak's understanding of the revolution. First, they are Zhivago's, it is he who says them; therefore they express Pasternak's own thinking. Second, they directly pertain to events of the October Revolution that have just occurred and that are not quite complete. Third, they explain the attitude of the progressive intelligentsia toward the revolution: ". . . this revelation is exploded right into the very thick of daily life." A revolution *is* a revelation ("exploded," given), and like any given, it is not subject to ordinary assessment, to an assessment from the standpoint of immediate human interests. Revolution is inescapable. Intervention in its events is not really possible; that is, their course cannot be altered. Their inescapability, their inevitability, makes every person drawn into their vortex, will-less, as it were.

In this instance, a frankly will-less person, but one who possesses intelligence and sophisticated sensibility, is the best possible hero for a novel! He sees, apprehends, even participates, in revolutionary events, but he participates only as a grain of sand caught up in a tempest, a whirlwind, a snowstorm. . . . Yurii Zhivago's neutrality in the civil war is declared, moreover, by his profession: he is an army doctor, that is, someone officially neutral in accordance with international conventions.

The antithesis of Yurii Zhivago is the ruthless Antipov-Strelnikov, who has actively intervened in the revolution on the side of the Reds. Strelnikov is the embodiment of will, the embodiment of the urge to take action. His armored train moves with all available speed, mercilessly crushing all resistance to the revolution. He too, though, is powerless to hasten or to delay the triumph of events. In this sense, Strelnikov is as will-less as Zhivago. . . .

IN HIS understanding of the course of history, Pasternak is closest to Tolstoy. . . . Tolstoy's philosophy, in his historical digressions, is more forthright; Pasternak's is hidden by lyric intensity. I do think, however, that in their artistic re-creation of events each has his own logic. Were it not for Tolstoy's historical worldview—if he had professed, instead, a view of the individual as history's prime mover—he would not have succeeded in creating a national epic. It would have been a tragedy of individual characters. Kutuzov would easily have drifted into the shadow of Napoleon, and the people, the nation, would have ended up somewhere at the bottom of events. Pasternak was aware of that.

Here again I take the liberty of quoting a passage from the novel:

> At the same time that [Dr. Zhivago] was working on his lament for Lara he was also

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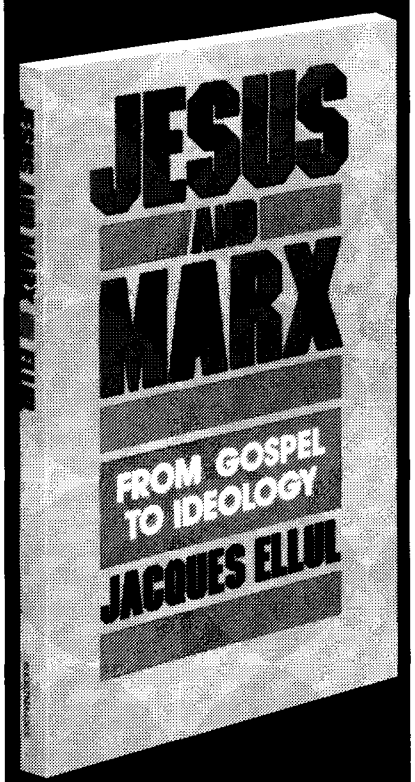

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scribbling the end of the notes he had accumulated over the years concerning nature, man, and various other things. As had always happened to him whenever he was writing, a host of ideas about the life of the individual and of society assailed him.

He reflected again that he conceived of history, of what is called the course of history, not in the accepted way but by analogy with the vegetable kingdom. In winter, under the snow, the leafless branches of a wood are thin and poor, like the hairs on an old man's wart. But in only a few days in spring the forest is transformed, it reaches the clouds, and you can hide or lose yourself in its leafy maze. This transformation is achieved with a speed greater than in the case of animals, for animals do not grow as fast as plants, and yet we cannot directly observe the movement of growth even in plants. The forest does not change its place, we cannot lie in wait for it and catch it in the act of change. Whenever we look at it, it seems to be motionless. And such also is the immobility to our eyes of the eternally growing, ceaselessly changing history, the life of society moving invisibly in its incessant transformations.

Tolstoy thought of it in just this way, but he did not spell it out so clearly. He denied that history was set in motion by Napoleon or any other ruler or general, but he did not develop his idea to its logical conclusion. No single man makes history. History cannot be seen, just as one cannot see grass growing. Wars and revolutions, kings and Robespierres, are history's organic agents, its yeast. But revolutions are made by fanatical men of action with one-track minds, geniuses in their ability to confine themselves to a limited field. They overturn the older order in a few hours or days, the whole upheaval takes a few weeks or at most years, but the fanatical spirit that inspired the upheavals is worshiped for decades thereafter, for centuries. . . .

This passage is crucial to an understanding not only of Pasternak's historical views, but of his attitude toward the revolution, to its events as a kind of absolute given, the rightfulness of whose occurrence is not subject to discussion. . . .

Boris Pasternak was never given to squeamishness in his poetry. Nor was he given to it in his depiction of history. Revolutionary events appeared before him in all their raw complexity. They did not fit into the neat, standard patterns of accepted accounts that have sometimes come from people who never saw or experienced the events themselves. . . .

About *My Sister Life*, his early collection of lyric poems, the poet once wrote: "I was totally indifferent about the identity of the power that had brought forth the book, because it was immensely greater than myself and the poetic conceptions surrounding me." These words might also be applied to his novel *Doctor Zhivago*. They attest to his tremendous modesty, to his full awareness of his role as a realistic portrayer of events.

DMITRI S. LIKHACHOV

III
MEMOIRS
BY NADEZHDA MANDELSTAM

The following introduction to the first installment of Nadezhda Mandelstam's memoirs appeared in the #8, August 1988 issue of the Soviet literary magazine Yunost *(Youth). The author Mikhail Polivanov is identified as a doctor of physico-mathematical sciences.*

Memory is returning to us. It is returning in the form of books that previously went unpublished, in the form of memoirs of various aspects of our past life. We are now remembering people who lived in those times. Every person who preserved his individuality, his integrity, became a focus for the attraction and crystallization of free thought. *Yunost* now publishes the first part of *Memoirs* by Nadezhda Yakovlevna Mandelstam, the widow of the great poet. Written more than a quarter of a century ago, it gives an account of the 1930s and prior years. Yet its author was still with us just ten years ago; and it is my wish that readers see the magnitude and the significance of people like her in our own day.

Nadezhda Yakovlevna Mandelstam (née Khazin) was born on October 30, 1899, at the very close of the 19th century. Her father was a sworn attorney, her mother a physician. They lived in Kiev, and she attended the Kiev Grammar School for Girls. She considered herself an artist, and after grammar school she worked in the studio of Alexandra Ekster. In the dreadful year 1919, in circumstances familiar to us from Bulgakov's novel *The White Guard*, Osip Mandelstam arrived in Kiev. He and Nadezhda Yakovlevna had common friends. They met at the Junk Shop (an acronym [in Russian] for "Artists, Writers, Actors, Musicians"), a cellar cabaret. They fell in love but soon parted, since it was dangerous for Mandelstam to stay in Kiev after the Bolsheviks left. As he was about to head south, he promised Nadya Khazin he would return for her. And indeed, a year and a half later, in March 1921, he came and found her. They remained together until May 1, 1938, the day of his final arrest.

The years spent with Mandelstam were the happiest, of course, for Nadezhda Yakovlevna, but they were also enormously difficult. Difficult not only for Mandelstam, but for our entire culture. The '20s were years marked by crude attempts to establish a regimented art, when the "light cavalry" of groups like RAPP [Russian Association of Proletarian Writers] and FOSP [Federation of Soviet Writers' Organizations] mounted planned assaults upon artists of every stripe, when ideological pressure on art increased, and arbitrary and often totally unfounded political charges barred artists from life for a very long time—years for which we paid dearly.

Without exaggeration, one can say that this was the ideological groundwork for the terror of the '30s. Alexander Blok's article "On the Calling of the Poet," written in the last year of his life [1921], was a prophetic warning; and in Mandelstam's "Fourth Prose" [1929-31] (*Raduga* magazine, 1988) there is an account of how these things happened. (The famous Zhdanov Resolution of 1946, which denounced the magazines *Zvezda* and *Leningrad* [for having published "harmful" works by Anna Akhmatova and Mikhail Zoshchenko], was merely an echo of those years; even the wording of it is a throwback to that era.)

In Mandelstam's generation, it was hardest for people with integrity, precisely because they had taken the revolutionary transformations of life and art seriously—as something achieved through the suffering of several generations of Russians. They felt a personal responsibility for the perversion and the repression of freedom that was suffocating art. It was not without reason that Mandelstam endured, like Pasternak, long periods of poetic silence during the '20s and '30s. In my view, Mandelstam wrote the poem that cost him his life precisely because he could no longer live or write in that stifling atmosphere. It was then that he announced that he was rejecting a life of that kind, and he openly asked for exile. "Rather stuff me like a cap in the sleeve / Of the Siberian steppes' warm furcoat."

In Voronezh, living on the meager assistance of a few friends, migrating from one refuge to another, Mandelstam again felt free. Not surprisingly, one of the first things he wrote there was "Children's Haircuts" [April 1935], a poem imbued with historical optimism, and astonishing for its openness. Over a period of three years he wrote about a

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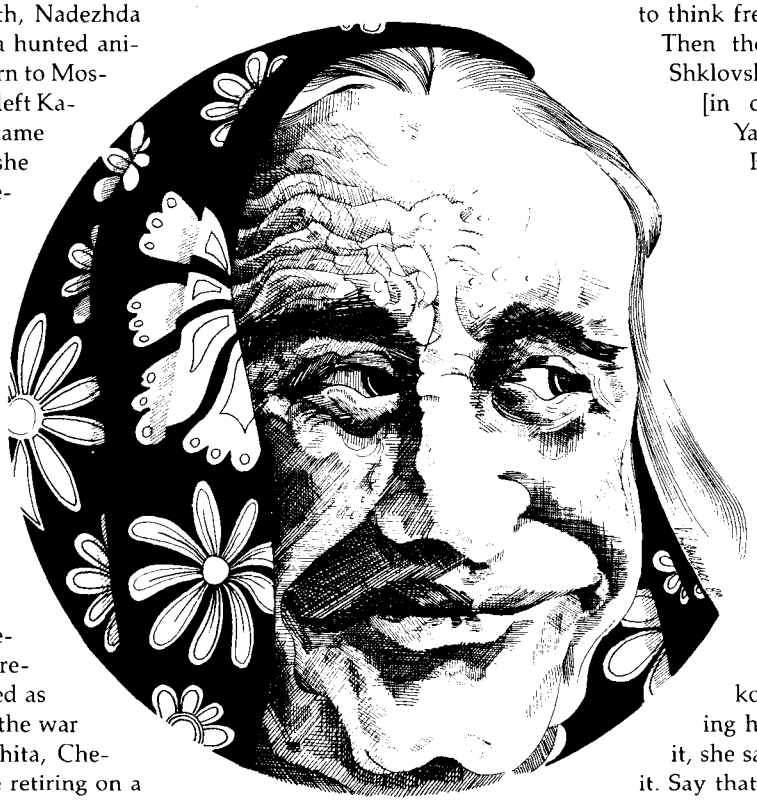
hundred poems—nearly a third of his entire oeuvre. Returning to Moscow in 1937, he said to Akhmatova: "I am ready for death." The reason, evidently, was that in that "one extra day" granted him by "the Assyrian" [Stalin], he had freed himself of the burden of unexpressed thoughts and unwritten verse. After a year of ordeals, of seeking refuge in town after town in the permitted zone beyond a hundred-kilometer radius from Moscow, Mandelstam was arrested on May 1, 1938, and at the end of that year (on December 27, according to official documents) he died in a transit camp at Vtoraya Rechka, near Vladivostok.

After Mandelstam's death, Nadezhda Yakovlevna led the life of a hunted animal. She was unable to return to Moscow. She had no home. She left Kalinin just before the police came to arrest her. In Strunino, she was not arrested only because of a silent demonstration by co-workers in a textile factory, and that same night she moved on once again. Afterward she lived in Maloyaroslavets, still elsewhere, and in Kalinin again.

During the war, she was rescued by Akhmatova, who helped her get to Tashkent. There Nadezhda Yakovlevna was able to earn a university degree, presumably by correspondence, and was certified as a teacher of English. After the war she lived in Ulyanovsk, Chita, Cheboksary, and Pskov, before retiring on a pension. All this time, though, there was one thing she wanted: to be forgotten about, not to draw attention, as she had been advised by Vinaver, an official of the "Political Red Cross," after Mandelstam's first arrest.

She wished to survive in order to preserve Mandelstam's legacy. She never dared even to write down many poems, or "Fourth Prose." She kept them memorized, as Akhmatova did with her *Requiem*. Not until 1956 did she think it possible to put the poems in writing, and even to publish them. And to this day we have no proper edition of Mandelstam!

She came to recollect everything he ever said and wrote, reflecting upon all his responses, all his observations, all his actions. She queried Akhmatova about the early period of his life. She read whatever books he had mentioned that were unfamiliar to her (Chaadaev, Solovyov, Florensky, Viacheslav Ivanov, Sergei Bulgakov, Berdyaev, *Landmarks*, and much more). She acknowledged that she came to Mandelstam as a giddy girl, a wild and mischievous young thing bent on a good time. Mandelstam unsettled her with the question, "Why do you think you ought to be happy?" Then he set her to a task she had never dreamed of, inuring her to poverty and "the painstaking tar of hard work." He had her write down his poems, his "Journey to Armenia" and "Conversation about Dante," and learn "Fourth Prose" by heart. It was as if he had foreseen the fate in store for them both, and was burrowing one of his badger holes.



By the time Nadezhda Yakovlevna was able to record all that she had experienced, recalled, and reflected upon, she had so thoroughly nurtured herself on Mandelstam that one can recognize him even in the style and the language of her books. She wrote about her age's lack of moral discrimination, about the surrender of personal opinion and feeling, as Mandelstam himself might have done.

I first met Nadezhda Yakovlevna in January 1962, in Tarusa. Though she was already a pensioner, her rights had not been restored, and she was living in the empty half of the Golyshevs' dacha. Against a background of the well-known picture of deprivation, asceticism, and homelessness common to both Osip Mandelstam and Anna Akhmatova, and inherited by Nadezhda Yakovlevna, I saw an old woman wearing a robe and slippers over bare feet. Of her own possessions, she had tea, Belomor cigarettes, a suitcase holding her papers, and a typewriter. She took her meals with the Golyshevs. She was writing her first volume, and immediately made us sit down and read it. She was a person with whom one could easily make friends, straightforward, candid, sharp-tongued, and unpretentious. In conversations she would teach people not only to think freely, but to speak freely.

Then there were the forays to the Shklovskys on Lavrushinsky Street [in central Moscow]. Nadezhda Yakovlevna would come from Pskov for a few days. (In Pskov, she was completing a specified number of years as a teacher in order to increase her pension a bit.) Her quarters were a cubby of a room off the kitchen. Many people wished to see her; those who came first had to leave in order to make room for others, and then wait their turn again in the kitchen. Vasilisa Shklovsky would later invite everyone to the dining table for tea.

At that time Nadezhda Yakovlevna was still half concealing her book. You may talk about it, she said, but don't say you've read it. Say that you know about it from our conversations. She was waiting for a volume of Mandelstam's poetry to appear in the Poet's Library series, and was also expecting a residence permit and an apartment in Moscow. She wanted to avoid, therefore, any open disputes. Surkov [the general secretary of the Writers' Union] had promised her both the book and a place to live back in 1956, but everything had quickly come to a standstill. Though Mandelstam's name had already been cleared in connection with the accusation against him in 1938, there were still the 1934 charges, and at the time (the events in Hungary had just taken place) he was denied rehabilitation.

A few years later she was finally able to get a small one-room cooperative apartment beyond the Kanatchikov Estate, on the first floor of a building on

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Bolshaya Cheryomushkinskaya Street. For the first time since Mandelstam's arrest, she was in her own home. The one room and kitchen had a few items of furniture. . . . Her more important books, including the Bible and Western editions of Mandelstam, were squeezed together with letters and manuscripts in an antique secretary next to the bed. . . . On the wall above her bed, several old icons hung in a row, like paintings. One I especially remember was "The Prophet Elijah's Ascent to Heaven in a Chariot of Fire." Somewhat later, an image of the Savior was given a place on its own little triangular shelf in the "icon corner." Sometimes an oil lamp burned beneath it, and the corner of the low room blackened with soot.

I used to drop in on her very frequently; for a while, nearly every week. There were always a lot of guests, four or five people a day. My wife once asked her: "Nadezhda Yakovlevna, how can you stand so many people?" "If you'd lived as I have," she replied, "without seeing a soul for 20 years, you wouldn't ask such a question."

What did we talk about? I've already mentioned that she read the books that were in some way connected with Mandelstam, ranging from Chaadaev to Berdyaev. Back in Tarusa, we talked about Viacheslav Ivanov [a leading symbolist poet]. I was completely baffled by her interest in Ivanov's prose efforts. Nadezhda Yakovlevna's response was that he had played a role in the formation of Mandelstam's views, and it was important for her to understand it.

We talked a lot about poetry, but not just Mandelstam's. Nadezhda Yakovlevna was enthusiastic about some lines of Yevtushenko's. One was "My cap of Moscow weave . . . ," and there was also something about Motherland and ducks. In response, I quoted her Mandelstam's lines: "And once more toward an indifferent homeland, / Like a wild duck, reproach will fly up . . . ," and suggested that this was the only reason she had liked the line. She agreed, but she wouldn't back down on Yevtushenko. In general, Nadezhda Yakovlevna was very eager to discover a contemporary poet. Later, as Akhmatova had done, she settled on Brodsky. She was very fond of him, calling him "the Redhead" and "Young Osia" [Osia is a nickname for both Joseph and Osip]. She anxiously took to heart the various twists and turns of his fate, and regarded him, if I may say so, as next in some homological line, after Mandelstam.

A few times she put me through a kind of veiled test on Mandelstam. Since childhood I had been enamored of his 1928 collection, however, and knew it almost by heart; I had become acquainted with his "Voronezh Notebooks" at the age of 18, before they ever circulated in samizdat, from one of the "caches" established by Nadezhda Yakovlevna herself—a pile of yellowed, various-sized pieces of paper covered with her distinctive handwriting.

IN DISCUSSING poetry, her approach seemed to reflect the modern schoolroom method. She would seize upon a line and demand a definite, final interpretation. Thus she insisted that Mandelstam's lines

> . . . why
> Did the sun of Alexander shine
> A hundred years ago, shine for all?

were written about Pushkin and Pushkin alone, whereas my feeling was that the first and most apparent interpretation—that they refer to Tsar Alexander I—should not be altogether discarded. She got angry and argued that Mandelstam couldn't possibly have felt that way about Alexander I. And that wasn't the end of it. "And yesterday's sun is carried on a black stretcher" must also be regarded as an allusion to Pushkin. "In Mandelstam, any time the sun is mentioned it refers to Pushkin," she said, and by way of explanation she quoted Andrei Kraevsky's truly memorable words: "The sun of our poetry has set. Pushkin is dead. . . ."

I argued that it was essential to preserve the freedom and the multidimensionality of associative space so that the poem can have resonance, but she didn't agree. We were once reading Mandelstam's wonderful, very late poem about "the born, the perilous, those not possessed of death" ("Where is the bound and nailed-down groan? . . .") She stopped me and asked, "Do you understand why Aeschylus is presented as a loader and Sophocles as a woodcutter?" I attempted to say what I still think now: that loading and woodcutting are simple, immutable (and prison-camp) occupations, that such words, when applied to the great tragedians, unite and elevate humankind beyond the bounds of time and cultures. She remained unsatisfied. "No," she said, "this requires some reading—Plutarch, maybe. These aren't just arbitrary characterizations; there must be a good reason for them.

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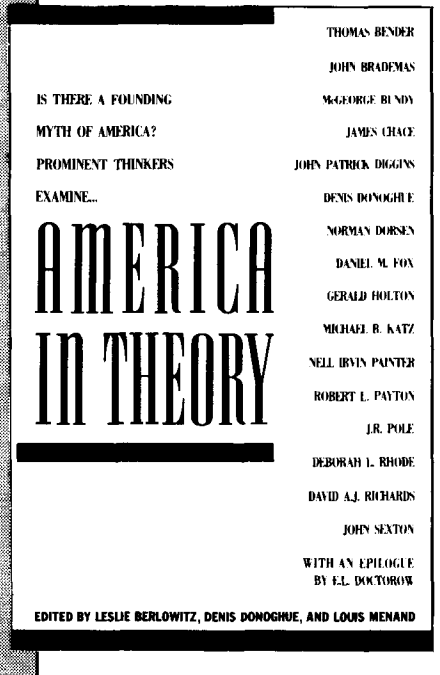

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With Osia, there always is."

In the mid-'60s, Nadezhda Yakovlevna began relating portions of her second volume, honing them, as it were, in conversation. The things that later aroused so much reproach—her bias, her offensive and unfair assertions, her scarcely justified accusations against some of her best friends—all seemed much milder in conversation. Still, at the time and later on, I could not believe that such a faithful friend and devotee as Nikolai Ivanovich Khardzhiev would destroy drafts and variants of Mandelstam's poems in order to make his own textual choices seem definitive. But everything surrounding the publication (rather, the non-publication) of Mandelstam, which culminated, in 1973, in a pathetic little edition that slandered him in the introduction, and so abridged the selection of poems as to make him unrecognizable—all of this was a source of bitter irritation to her, and became a kind of obsession. In the light of those circumstances, it is not surprising that her friends forgave her a great deal. . . .

SHE HAD no interest at all in owning things. The condition of "splendid poverty, luxurious destitution" still reigned in her home. She treated books the same way; in her home it seemed that there was not even a special place for them. The books that she needed for her work she would borrow from people, or just keep around for a while. When she began to receive royalties for her books, she gave all the money away. It pleased her very much that after being indigent and a beggar all her life, she was now in a position to give gifts and financial help to friends.

She was someone who possessed an inner freedom, and she behaved accordingly, having no regard for prohibitions of any kind. A private person, she allowed herself to say whatever she thought. She received foreign visitors who had an interest in Mandelstam, even though she realized this wasn't advisable. Finally she published her *Memoirs* abroad, knowing that they couldn't be published in our country.

In the late '70s, Nadezhda Yakovlevna began to grow weak. She started having problems with her heart. Several times she was confined to her bed for long stretches. During those periods, she received guests in her room and they would stay briefly at her bedside. The number of visitors was restricted. . . . Her friends arranged an around-the-clock watch. . . . She died on December 29, 1980. The day after her death, the police came and ordered people to immediately "vacate the premises," which they were required to seal. A coffin was supposed to be brought later, but they summoned an ambulance and had Nadezhda Yakovlevna's body taken to the morgue without a coffin . . . I'd prefer not to remember it.

On January 3, 1981, we buried Nadezhda Yakovlevna Mandelstam. The person we buried belonged not just to the era of the '30s and '40s (ancient history already, for many) which she so vividly described in her books. She was also a part of the '60s and '70s; around her, in her little kitchen, thought truly pulsed, and close by, through that kitchen, the events of our life flowed past.

Experience becomes a cultural and historical fact only after it has been recorded. In her books Nadezhda Yakovlevna left us an epic description of the '20s and '30s. Without reservation, she condemned the moral and cultural brutalization of those years. She brought us the feeling of a living bond between historical epochs. She stared into the pupils of that Wild Animal, the Age, and joined with her own blood the vertebrae of two centuries.

MIKHAIL POLIVANOV

LOUIS S. GLANZMAN, *SIGNING OF THE CONSTITUTION*, 1987. COLLECTION, INDEPENDENCE NATIONAL HISTORICAL PARK. PHOTO © 1988 LOUIS S. GLANZMAN

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IV
Joseph Brodsky's Nobel Prize

This article appeared in Izvestia *on December 4, 1988, written from Paris by two special correspondents for the newspaper. It was accompanied by a picture of Brodsky on his last day in the Soviet Union in 1972, taken by his father, the Leningrad news photographer Alexander Brodsky. This was the first time his father's name had appeared in print in some 30 years.*

About a quarter of a century ago, a young man was brought to trial in Leningrad. He was sentenced to the loss of his freedom, for parasitism. The young man wrote poetry, but the court simply refused to regard that as work. What's more, the judge held a trump card: "Who accorded you the status of poet?"

Who, indeed? He wasn't published ("for political reasons"). And the fact that his poems circulated widely in handwritten, typed, and oral form, bypassing the printers, was not to his credit; it was a strike against him. The poet was shipped off to the northern hinterland of Arkhangelsk province. Great countrymen of his—Anna Akhmatova, Alexander Tvardovsky, Kornei Chukovsky, Dmitri Shostakovich—appealed on his behalf. Alas, to no avail. In 1972, the poet left his homeland.

Fifteen years later, last year, he was awarded a Nobel Prize in Sweden, for essentially the same thing he had once served a sentence for. Judge Savelieva in Leningrad and the Swedish Academy in Stockholm differed in their views of poetry. . . .

Laureates in literature have included Kipling, Maeterlinck, Faulkner, Hamsun . . . such eminences as Romain Rolland, Rabindranath Tagore, Winston Churchill. . . . And in the same rank, our compatriots: Ivan Bunin (1933), Boris Pasternak (1958), Mikhail Sholokhov (1965), Alexander Solzhenitsyn (1970), Joseph Brodsky (1987).

Cause for rejoicing!

Instead of legitimate feelings of patriotic pride and joy, however, there is sadness. "It's time to stop coddling this literary parasite. There is no place in Leningrad for the likes of Brodsky. . . ." (From the evening paper *Vecherny Leningrad* [1963].) The poet left his homeland at the age of 32. As of that time, four of his poems had been published there. It's hard to recall now whether this early poem was one of the four:

No country or churchyard
Do I wish to choose;
To Vasilievsky Island
I shall come to die.
Your dark-blue facade
I won't find in the dark;
On the pavement I'll fall
Between the faded lines . . .

These verses were favorites of Anna Akhmatova, who predicted that the young man would have a great and tragic destiny.

This past autumn, almost a year since receiving the Nobel Prize, Joseph Brodsky came to Europe from New York. In that year's time, with enviable dispatch, several European publishers have issued a number of his books. The poet came to Paris at the invitation of French Slavists for a scholarly seminar on "Verbal Art and Philosophy." Despite the participation of two Nobel laureates (the second was Czeslaw Milosz), the seminar was given no special play or promotion in the press. And it went on without fanfare in a small classroom of a former polytechnical school. The present writers, two Soviet journalists, managed to stop Brodsky in the lobby. He heard out our questions with dispassion, and with the utmost civility. It was already time to go, but his response was, "Never mind, there's still time." We spoke for about ten minutes. But more about that later.

The talks given by the philosophers were wearisome, and moreover in French, which Brodsky doesn't know. From the stage the poet absently looked out over the room. Occasionally an errant smile would cross his face, evidently when someone in the audience caught his eye. He smoked heavily. When he took off his glasses, one could see his fatigue.

That, in fact, was the most vivid memory of our first meeting: the fatigue and the utter unpretentiousness. There was nothing studied about him, in his modest attire or in any of his movements. A few days later, another meeting took place, unscheduled. This time it was the Russian poet reading before a Russian audience, again without publicity, in a room even smaller than one of our schoolrooms. In attendance were reporters from [the Paris weekly] *Russkaya Mysl*, interpreters, Slavic literature specialists, and émigrés. People even sat in the one little aisle, on the floor.

With his jacket off and his collar unbuttoned, Brodsky recited poetry for more than two hours—intoning, standing there, his head bent over the pages. Again he smoked a lot, allowing himself a break. He read none of his early poems, those of his youth. Afterward, for over an hour he answered questions.

"Have you been invited to come to Russia? No? What if they do invite you—will you go?"

"I find it hard to imagine myself a visitor and performer touring the country in which I was born and grew up. That will be one more of the absurdities which my existence, as it is, already has in abundance. While it may still make some sense for a criminal to return to the scene of the crime—if he has some money buried there, let's say—it's basically senseless to return to the scene of love. Of course, I could go there and smile, and say 'Yes,' and accept congratulations, but the idea of that sort of thing I find terribly unpleasant. I've never allowed—and never will—a lot of fuss to be made about my life. That is, I'll always be opposed to it. . . . If I could just show up there quite suddenly as a private individual and see two or three people. . . . On the whole, though, I doubt it."

A WOMAN'S voice: "Do you dream of Leningrad?" "I rarely dream. The more a person moves about, the more complicated his feelings of nostalgia. You dream of a colonnade but you can no longer tell if it's the Petersburg Stock Exchange or the Vienna Opera House."

(Wind brings me no sound here
Of weeping Russian trumpets of war.)

"How is it for you there—where you live now, good?" "The same as always—both good and not so good. The ratio between good and bad usually stays more or less the same in life."

"Have you tried your hand at Russian fiction?" "Me? No. Chekhov once said that in the course of his life he had tried writing everything but poetry and denunciations! Paraphrasing him, I can say I've tried writing everything but denunciations and fiction."

"Do you keep abreast with Soviet poetry?" "More or less. To tell you the truth, I don't particularly care for the younger generation." Specific names were mentioned to Brodsky and his reaction, on the whole, was unenthusiastic. Might he have been too harsh, perhaps, or unfair? Then again, he has his own standard and his own point of reference. . . .

Hasn't he, so far away, as a Russian poet, lost some of the feeling for his native tongue? "It's possible, something may have changed. . . . In a different environment one's writing becomes to some extent automatic. . . . In Russia, I would have written a poem and not have

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asked myself that question. I used to envy three that I mentioned because they lived at home, the walls helped them, the language helped them, the natural condition of their existence helped them.... But it takes no less prowess to remain oneself even in an unnatural situation. From time to time, I'd like to hear what those three might have to say—about what I write.... The point is not that language is the products of poets, but that poets are the product of language. So long as the Russian language exists, from time to time something remarkable is always going to happen. That's a property of our language. Regardless of what's going on in that country, it will always yield something remarkable from its depths. As long as there's a Russian language, poetry is inevitable."

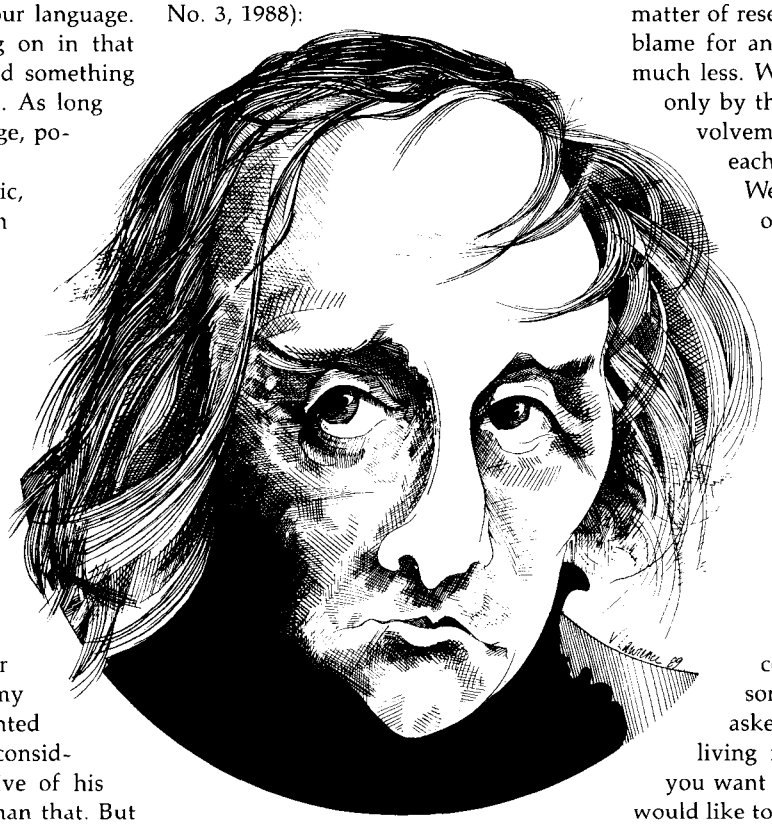
Isn't it sad, isn't it tragic, that someone with such feeling and love for his native tongue is awarded a prize in literature for work in a foreign language—for poems in translation, that can't be translated without losing something?

"What did getting the Nobel Prize mean to you? Did you feel different?" "No, nothing changed. It's nice, of course, it flatters your pride. But then, I've never had any problem with my pride." When he was presented with the Nobel Prize, he considered himself a representative of his own generation, no more than that. But no less than that, either:

> That generation—the generation born precisely at the time when the Auschwitz crematoria were working full blast, when Stalin was at the zenith of his God-like, absolute power, which seemed sponsored by Mother Nature herself—that generation came into the world, it appears, in order to continue what, theoretically, was supposed to be interrupted in those crematoria and in the anonymous common graves of Stalin's archipelago. The fact that not everything got interrupted, at least not in Russia, can be credited in no small degree to my generation, and I am no less proud of belonging to it than I am of standing here today. And the fact that I am standing here today is a recognition of the services that generation has rendered to culture; recalling a phrase from Mandelstam, I would add, to world culture.
>
> [from the Nobel Lecture]

"'In Russia, a poet is more than a poet.' What about in the U.S.?" "He's a poet. And that's a lot more respectable."

Now researchers in our country, too, have begun to write about Brodsky's rhymes and his rhythms, about his intonation and punctuation. And it's good that they have. Only we shouldn't forget how things once were. The poet Alexander Kushner speaks of the final days that Brodsky spent in his homeland (*Neva*, No. 3, 1988):



... We happened to meet at the Kryukov Canal. Brodsky looked pale and agitated. It was then that he told me of his impending departure (the matter hadn't been finally settled, but it was being decided at that very moment at a high echelon).... We went to his home on Liteiny Prospect, and while I was there the telephone rang. It was an official call. "Yes," Brodsky replied. The matter had been settled. He hung up and covered his face with his hands.... His transplantation to foreign soil was coerced and very hard. Abroad, in the United States, he had to undergo two heart operations. Remember Mandelstam's lines: "Movement of these lips / Evidently takes a toll, And the crown gads about, / Destined for the ax."

Besides the two operations, there was the death of his parents, to whom he never had a chance to say his last goodbye.

To return to that very first brief, ten-minute chat: "Now that your work is gradually getting back to your motherland, don't you somehow have a desire to return?" He stood there pale, tired, polite. "No ..." "But what about 'No country or churchyard do I wish to choose ...'?" "Only to the churchyard, perhaps." "Suppose that instead of getting a private invitation, you were invited by the Writers' Union?" "Even less reason."

He paused for a moment. "It's not a matter of resentment ... No, no one's to blame for anything. Neither you nor I, much less. We! ... Blame is gauged not only by the extent of one's direct involvement, but by the standard of each individual's conscience. We, each one of us living in our own time, are all implicated in everything that happens."

> This won't be heard up
> North, nor where hot
> sands hug cactus.
> I don't know anymore
> what earth will nurse
> my carcass.
> Scratch on, my pen:
> let's mark the white
> the way it marks us.
>
> [translated by
> Joseph Brodsky]

Still, he seems to have come to a crossroads of some sort. In Denmark, he was asked the question that no one living in exile has avoided: "Do you want to return to Russia?" ... "I would like to go to my former homeland to visit my parents' grave and once again see the inside of two or three apartments I know."

... "Have you heard that one of our magazines is planning to publish something on that ill-fated trial?" "Yes, I have. But I don't think it's really necessary." He's probably right. But so are we. Because isn't it important to look back, once more, at ourselves as we recently were? If we really want to move forward, not just in word but in deed, don't we have to evaluate ourselves? When should we do it, if not today? And not merely for self-purification or repentance (we have the knack of repenting and then sinning all over again), but so that in the future it will be impossible, or at least more difficult, to decide someone's fate so drastically.

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History remembers how many times—in how many ages—this has happened: two different types of composition follow one another closely. First, someone's lines fit into rhyme in a way that is unique and incurs disfavor. Next comes an indictment, a resolution, a sentence. There have been times when even executioners were dispensed with; duels provided the assistance.

History remembers how many times an icon and an ax have taken turns in the very same corner. And it also confirms that in expatriation, whether voluntary or an act of self-preservation, the Muse does not die. Far from their motherland, émigrés and exiles alike have worthily represented Russian culture, promoting it and advancing it, and thereby enriching world culture as well. Today each one of us engaged in the revaluation of values is both plaintiff and defendant rolled into one.

Where did that early poem of his leave off? "On the pavement I'll fall / Between the faded lines . . ."

And my soul, tirelessly
Hastening into the darkness,
Will be glimpsed beneath the bridges
In the Petrograd smoke.
A fine April drizzle,
Beneath my head light snow,
And then I'll hear a voice:
"So long, dear friend."
And I'll see two lives
Far beyond the river,
As I press my cheek
To my indifferent native land.
Like little sisters
From unlived years,
They come running to the island,
And wave goodbye to the boy.

. . . "Who accorded you the status of poet?" snapped the judge. The young man replied: "I think it comes . . . from God."

Y. KOVALENKO AND E. POLIANOVSKY

TRUTH AND CONSEQUENCES

That Noble Dream: The "Objectivity Question" and the American Historical Profession by Peter Novick

(Cambridge University Press, 688 pp., $49.50, $15.95 paper)

A thesis, or better a theme, does run in and out of this large volume from beginning to end. It is proclaimed in its title, *That Noble Dream*, borrowed from Charles A. Beard, who used it for one of two essays renouncing faith in objectivity in historiography. As developed here, the theme deserves attention on its own, and I shall return to it later. But it is also used as an idea around which to organize an informal history of the American historical profession. Since the latter is of more general interest, I shall take it up first.

It was only in the 1880s that academics set about claiming professional status for historians, and it took some time and a bit of doing. So a historian of ripe years and more than a half century of active involvement can have known or encountered at a distance members of all the generations participating since then. There were still a few founding fathers around in the early 1930s. One's mentors take charge before this volume is half done; by midway one's contemporaries are past their prime and fading out, and junior colleagues are taking over; by the last chapter one's students are rivaling them for attention. These are people one knew, or knows, some of them quite well, and these pages are filled with what they were saying and thinking, often in private, about each other and each other's work.

Relativist or not, Peter Novick works, like most of us, on the assumption that there is truth, or some of it, to be learned about the past by research in documents. He turns over millions of them, many of them private papers never before used, on that rather old-fashioned objectivist assumption, and his researches produce a perfect flood of information: call it truth, fact, theory, what you will. A fully engaged and reasonably informed member of the guild for some years (first book, 1938), I admit that I learned a lot about four generations of my fellow craftsmen that I did not know—some I never suspected. Much of what I learned has little if anything to do with "the objectivity question" or any thesis about it, but it is no less interesting for that.

Among the "telling" truths, for example, are such mundane ones as those about salaries, textbooks, productivity, teaching loads, student patronage, appointments, tenure, and security. In all these aspects, wide variations occurred from one period and one place to another, and the fluctuations had their impact on the teaching and the writing of historians and on their conduct toward each other. Rivalries abound. One early definition of a historical scholar was "a man who has a quarrelsome interest in his neighbor's work"; another called them "more or less cannibals: they live by destroying each others' conclusions." Squabbles and vendettas often got more attention than work of merit. J. Franklin Jameson's classic on the Revolution sold fewer than a thousand copies, and it took 17 years for John Hicks's book on Populism to sell 1,500 copies. And all this while pandering amateurs like Claude G. Bowers commanded large sales for his travesty on Reconstruction.

Professional history started, and for a good while remained, an Anglo-Saxon enterprise, with members largely of that breed, with a theory holding that institutions and ideas of any great value came of Anglo-Saxon origins. Anglophiles apologized for the Revolution against "race brothers." Racial biases of various kinds were "near unanimous." Acceptance of Jews was rare and long resisted. The amount of casual slurs and overt anti-Semitism in correspondence regarding the appointment or the promotion of Jews is little short of incredible, and the victims were not confined to the obscure.

In the two decades following World War II American history enjoyed what I have called a "boom period," a period of unprecedented expansion and prosperity that was followed immediately by a sudden and rapid decline. Neither boom nor collapse is adequately pictured in this book, but both had profound effects. The number of bachelor's degrees awarded in history in 1970-71 reached the all-time high of 44,663, then rapidly plunged in the next 15 years to a low of 16,413 in 1985-86. The barometer of confidence, optimism, and vitality in the profession rose and fell accordingly. At the peak of the boom, just before the fall, with enrollments, publications, and periodicals soaring to new heights, the assurance manifest in the history profession verged on complacency. That mood has long since vanished, but while it

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lasted it produced striking results.

The expansion brought job opportunities not only for Jews, but for other underrepresented ethnic groups as well. Some considerable number with unorthodox views, including assorted leftists and Marxists, also found a footing in the g[illegible]d during this period. Novick is especially informative about the so-called "New Left," a term he rightly dismisses as a "misleading designation" because of the multiplicity and the diversity of opinions it covers. The diverse wings of the New Left usually rallied together for mutual support, but without common policy or doctrine. He is most helpful in sorting out and identifying by origin and school members of the leftist cohort of historians. There were not only "red diaper babies" but "red romper toddlers," with and without Communist Party attachments, and endless varieties of Marxists. Novick, for example, identifies himself as starting in "the 'Shachtmantide' Young Socialist League" when it was "evolving from dissident Trotskyism to the left wing of social democracy."

WE ARE treated to inside stories and revealing episodes from the McCarthy era of persecution. In the early and mid-'60s, there followed a climate of tolerance in which "leftist historians had good grounds to see bright prospects for their eventual acceptance . . . an era of good feeling, both within the left, and between left and center." That era ended with the outburst of militant student protest that not only divided leftist and liberal historians, "but polarized the left itself." Among issues at stake were questions of whether destruction of the university was required or total disruption was sufficient. The book includes a priceless report of a doctoral oral examination in Fayerweather Hall at Columbia in October 1968, written by the student under examination, who was in complete sympathy with the protesters. The professors, he wrote:

> began their questioning amidst the sounds of breaking furniture, shouts of rage and pride, fragments of falling plaster and chants of "shut it down." . . . The behavior of the faculty members was curious. . . . Every time plaster fell on their heads they felt a strange thrill; they alone stood between America and Totalitarianism. . . . I sensed, during the whole awful comedy, that they were more interested in their own performance than in mine. . . . I played the game by all the rules.

Unlike the new Jewish recruits to the profession, who were integrationist and usually assimilationist, who were historians who happened to be Jews, the new black historians were separatists, nationalists of some sort, scornful of assimilation. They came on organized as black historians, just as the new women historians, who shared some of these characteristics, usually presented themselves as feminist historians. Both claimed distinctive styles of perception and thought. But black radicals struck a militant pose against white radicals who ventured onto what they claimed was exclusively their turf. They repeatedly shouted down and insulted white intruders of the left. As it became institutionalized in black studies departments, however, the separatist movement declined as rapidly as it rose, and only half of the departments survive with dwindling support.

Women started earlier in the profession than blacks, but until recently their numbers and influence were marginal, and are still quite low. Novick finds "striking parallels" between new black and new women members. Some similarities do exist, though feminist history and women's studies have not shared the decline that black studies have undergone. The new women were

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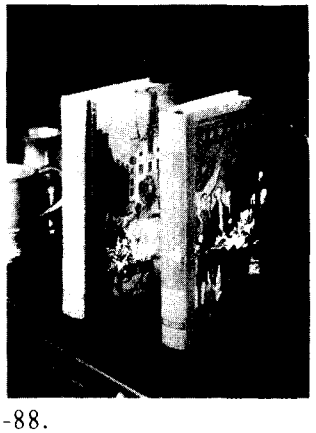

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as particularist and exclusionist as blacks, and those whose subject was women's history were opposed to integration and supported separate departments or "studies." Both stressed the neglect of their subject, the overlooked contributions of their group, oppression and its consequences, and some measure of cultural and institutional separatism. To illustrate the harshness with which feminists could treat women historians whom they regarded as apostates, Novick cites the treatment accorded Rosalind Rosenberg when she appeared as a witness for the company in the Sears case regarding charges of discriminatory employment practices.

All this and more of the history of professional historians is related without much reference to the conflict between objectivists and relativists. That theme is implicit in some of the discussion of individual historians, however, and explicit in a separate treatment of ideology.

Confronted with the "demand to know if I am 'for' or 'against' " historical objectivity, Novick declares that he does not think the idea "true or false, right or wrong: I find it not just essentially contested, but essentially confused." And it is "not a single idea, but rather a sprawling collection of assumptions, attitudes, aspirations, and antipathies ... the exact meaning of which will always be in dispute." Once a term as sacred to historians as "health" to physicians, "valor" to men of arms, or "justice" to men of law, "objectivity" has fallen in and out of favor of late among historians and philosophers of history. Neither a celebration nor a jeremiad, this book, according to its author, "is not a call to arms, nor even a plea for reform," but rather an effort to expand the historians' awareness of what they are about and their readers' understanding of what historians present them and the claims they make for it.

The American conception of historical objectivity leaned heavily on a rather faulty reading of von Ranke's phrase, *wie es eigentlich gewesen* ("as it really was"), and a translation of the word *Wissenschaft* as "science." Borrowing the inflated prestige of empirical science, the fledgling professionals of history gained confidence and pride in their craft. No mere storytellers or propagandists they, members of the Johns Hopkins historical seminar called it "a laboratory of historical truth." Founding fathers of the new profession built the doctrine of empirical objectivity into its foundations and hammered it home. For the first two generations it remained an article of faith.

World War I shook 19th-century certitudes in all realms of thought and culture, but less in history. Among historians "applied common sense" still claimed the mantle of science and continued to claim it for quite a while. The foremost challengers of "that noble dream" of historical objectivity in the '30s were Carl L. Becker and Charles A. Beard. The doctrine they shared was that historical interpretation was, and always had been, relative to the historian's time, place, views, prejudices, interests, and circumstances. Their heresy was promptly named "relativism" by their objectivist detractors.

Sharing a Midwestern, Republican, Progressive background, Becker and Beard were also united by bonds of mutual affection and esteem. Becker had the lighter touch and the quicker wit, but was more shy. Both enjoyed making fun of the pretensions of the objectivists. Becker gravely assured them that the pasts men created were "perhaps neither true nor false, but only the most convenient form of error." Such levity about the founding myth of the profession evoked from the old school response that resembled the excommunication of heretics. Indeed, "the horror of relativism resembled the common horror of atheism." Apprentices in the mid-'30s enjoyed the dismay of their elders; but the old school continued to prevail generally through the interwar years.

The exigencies of the cold war helped to strengthen the defenders of objectivity, and so did the upsurge of confidence and optimism in the profession that accompanied the history boom in the universities. Beard was in disfavor for his opposition to American intervention in the War, and his relativist heresies were unfairly associated with fascism; his views were denounced by Lewis Mumford, Allan Nevins, and Samuel Eliot Morrison, among others. A mood of consensus, affirmation, and reconciliation of extremes proved congenial, or at least tolerant, toward the objectivist posture.

THE COLLAPSE of that consensus occurred during the turmoil of the '60s, and it is attributed by Novick chiefly to the lurch toward the left in political culture, the increase in the number of leftist historians, and the cynicism about truth and objectivity in the criticism of the Vietnam War. If everyone was lying, went the reasoning, why not simply believe whatever one found congenial and convenient? A crisis in objectivity swept through virtually all the disciplines in the academy (including the sciences themselves, provoked by Thomas Kuhn's notion of paradigms). Some variety of radical relativism seized the social sciences, literary criticism, philosophy, psychoanalysis, and jurisprudence. History departments were certainly not left alone to weather the crisis. A few quantifiers joined with the humanists to speak up for the faith in objectivity, but their voices were sometimes drowned out. Fragmented beyond hope of unification, "The historical profession of the 1980s would have been unrecognizable to those who had established it in the 1880s."

From the start, Novick is at pains to dissociate himself from partisanship as between objectivists and relativists. He

Captions To Certain Slide Lectures

Opalakah, Michigan in haystack time
The rictus of Peloponnesian macrodents
All-American fullback Otiose Grimes
One moment after Walla Walla's history commenced
Angevine escutcheon with a *fleur-de-lis* above
A bust of Sartre made entirely of farina
The only man Aunt Lulu ever loved
An ex-Marine inside a manner of marina
The Bosnian widows' *a capella* choir on a walk
Silverlights of lesser auks
Why Titicaca never rivalled Tehotihuacan
The bitter litter of Bellerophon

BENJAMIN IVRY

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also attempts to maintain that neither position has "any clear, permanent political valence," and that both are "defended from a variety of points on the political spectrum," far left to far right. He has no trouble finding examples to support his point, from Marx on down. Yet he is obliged to admit that the defense of objectivity often came from the right, and the criticism from the left. In the nature of things, objectivity is frequently associated with the status quo, and relativity with the maneuverability of attack and change. If logic be pressed, Novick's claim that neither position is "true or false, right or wrong" is itself essentially relativist: it is the more congenial with his generally leftist sympathies.

IT MIGHT help to declare my own position on the matter. While I reject the evasive solution of one group of historians who claim to be objective relativists, I do hold that valid needs exist for both of these views. In this, as in many important historical controversies, it is not the existence but the comparative importance of the disputed phenomena that is the real issue. That is certainly true of another historical controversy with which I have some familiarity, that over continuity and change in history. However passionate the advocates of the one or the other, they would end (if they lacked the wisdom to begin) with the admission that there would be no history at all without some of both. So it is also with all but the most extreme partisans of objectivity and relativity.

In his final chapter Novick chooses, for reasons not clear, to illustrate the ideological issues of the "Objectivity Question" with the case of David Abraham's book, *The Collapse of the Weimar Republic: Political Economy and Crisis* (1981). The reasons are unclear because the issue at stake in this case is not objectivity, but integrity in the use of evidence. A highly controversial dispute over the scholarship of Abraham's book on the relation of German business to the rise of Nazism, the case has divided the profession bitterly. With his usual candor, Novick writes that "David Abraham was my student, and is my good friend," and that "the reader should know at the outset that I am not at all 'neutral' about David Abraham, his persecution, or his persecutors." Abraham himself admits "there are simply too many errors in my work," that some of them are serious—"inexcusable" is his word; his critics say "flagrant"—but that they are errors of carelessness, not deviousness, and do not affect the validity of his argument. His critics maintain that his errors are tendentious and do support his thesis. His defenders draw distinctions between "facticity" and "truth" that suggest the independence of historical truth from the faithful use of valid historical evidence. All this may in Novick's eyes support the view that objectivists are inflexible in method and conservative in outlook, while relativists are liberating and forward-looking. But if so, it does seem a more felicitous and less dubious illustration might have been brought forward.

On the whole I believe historians and their readers owe rather more to Peter Novick's efforts than the above illustration might suggest. He has made us more conscious of the confusion that prevails in the history profession, where, as in Israel, to use his quotation from the Book of Judges, there is no king and "every man did that which was right in his own eyes." The old dispute between objectivity and relativity will never be settled to the satisfaction of doctrinaire extremists on either side. In the meantime, in spite of their cries of woe and chaos, much honest and productive work in history goes forward.

C. VANN WOODWARD

YUPPIES ALONG THE SEINE

Impressionism: Art, Leisure, and Parisian Society by Robert L. Herbert

(Yale University Press, 352 pp., $60)

The works of Goya and Turner offer us the boldest individual leaps of imagery and technique in 19th-century painting. Goya applied his late "Black Paintings" directly to the walls of his country house outside Madrid; their hallucinated subjects and bold style anticipated the innovations of Impressionism and Surrealism. Saved by Baron d'Erlanger, the paintings were exhibited at the 1878 Paris World's Fair at the height of Impressionism. The English recluse loved to finish his works in public performance on varnishing day. Helped by Ruskin's efforts to open an art-historical space for his new technique, Turner pioneered alone the path from the classical ideal, through realism, to a visionary art that approached abstraction.

Why do we open our eyes and our hearts more readily to a group of French painters who organized eight independent exhibits between 1878 and 1886 than to Goya and Turner? We welcome as close to our own the story of successful innovation by the Impressionists, with their vivid temperaments and contrasting social backgrounds. Drawing together painters, models, critics, novelists, poets, collectors, and dealers, they appeared to form an entire society of art. Their boating parties and dazzling brushwork seem to belong culturally and politically to our times, and inspire a peculiarly personal nostalgia. Above all, the Impressionists reached beyond Goya and Turner and Delacroix to release cadenzas of light. The first large albums I remember seeing on pianos and coffee tables in the '30s were filled with the almost naked colors of Monet and van Gogh. And as time passed, Cubism, Expressionism, and abstraction never displaced Impressionism in public affection. We keep trying to explain to ourselves its continuing appeal, the meaning of its hovering smile. Are those blowsy street scenes idyllic? Are they ironic? Are they radical? Or all of the above?

Twenty-five years ago, scholars and critics emphasized the role of direct optical perception in Impressionist painting. Their preoccupation with light and color motifs directed attention away from the urban and social situations depicted; and there was a tendency to prefer the late, almost non-figurative work of Monet. But an overwhelming number of major exhibits, catalogs, and books in the past ten years has profoundly modified that approach by emphasizing context. "The New Painting," a large exhibition in San Francisco and Washington in 1986, partially reassembled the eight original shows of the Impressionists (of the Société Anonyme, at the start) in sequence. At the same time, the new Musée d'Orsay in Paris decided to rep-

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resent the total artistic output of 19th-century France, hanging the most blatant beside the most subtle in a Piranesi-like floating opera of art history. Recent scrutiny of the Impressionists has searched not so much for those painters' connections with 20th-century tendencies as for their roots in their own era, and in the earlier work of the Barbizon school and of Realism. Monet, who lived on actively at work until 1926, was replaced as the swing man by Manet, who died in 1883.

ROBERT HERBERT is a seasoned scholar who has mounted exhibitions and published important writings on both the Barbizon school and Neo-Impressionism. n a famous article in 1979, Herbert exploded the notion that the blurred, "unfinished" surface effects of Monet's compositions arose from negligence or improvisation. For his new book, beautifully illustrated, Herbert ranges far beyond painting techniques to draw on guide books, travelers' accounts, statistical reports, and other contemporary sources. He sets out for us broad swatches of daily life, primarily entertainments, and fashions.

Herbert's opening chapter argues that the Impressionists performed a "wrenching of painting into the present" by choosing as subjects the wide boulevards and elegant parks of Haussmann's redrawn Paris. Herbert examines the conflict between immediacy and detachment in Degas's back-stage studies of dancers with hovering males and attendant mothers. Manet's comparable café scenes depict customers isolated in public, bereft of gaiety or even communication. Loneliness and commerce have infected all domains—except perhaps Renoir's not yet spoiled *Moulin de la Galette* (1876). Herbert provides us with fascinating information about the construction and financing of Second Empire parks and racetracks, where fashion and luxury found their stage, and where Degas and Manet followed them.

His longest chapter, on the sites along the banks of the Seine to which all classes of Parisians were attracted on holidays, supplies maps and notes on railroad travel, eating, swimming, and boating. This Sunday world, which has become familiar to us through Impressionist paintings, was being built up and industrialized throughout the 1860s and 1870s. Monet gradually turned away from the urban invasion of landscape and cultivated his own immense garden at Giverny. Manet and Renoir assimilated social transformation of the countryside with more equanimity. A later chapter, "At the Seaside," compares the responses of several painters to the scenes at summer resorts that were rapidly replacing fishing villages along the Channel coast in Normandy. (Herbert includes some superb pages on Berthe Morisot's suggestive compositions of vacationers at Fécamp and on the Isle of Wight.)

Thanks to a legion of devoted scholars, we probably know more about the social and personal background of Impressionists than about any set of artists in history. Herbert has assimilated this vast domain of information, and has searched out much more about the conditions of life in late 19th-century France, especially the theaters and *cafés-chantants* of Paris and the attractions along the Seine. In an unavoidable paradox, Herbert frequently points out class differences (skating was a middle-class sport; horseback riding was aristocratic) in a book basically concerned with the blurring of class lines in modern urban life. Fortunately he rarely refers to that great empty stereotype, "bourgeois values," and he does not overplay the term "modernity." Just short of a foot square, this tightly designed book contains as many fine illustrations as two-column pages of text, along with a chronology from 1848 to 1886, ample notes, and a superb bibliography. In a practice now becoming common, reproductions of full paintings have margins and reproductions of details are bled to the edge of the page. (I have two quibbles: the dimensions of a painting are given not in its caption, but in a separate list at the front, and the glue in the spine does not hold.)

BEFORE READING this thematically organized study, one should be familiar with the basic outline of Impressionism and with the lives and styles of its principal painters. Three quotations should reveal the connections Herbert sets out to establish, as tersely declared in his subtitle:

> Renoir's free brushwork . . . is an expression of his society's longing for signs of those values that were threatened by the organization of the urban-industrial world: spontaneity, individualism, and the freedom to find consolation among natural things.
>
> . . . . . .
>
> In this book I have tried to show that impressionist paintings cannot be separated from the history of the events, places, persons, and social institutions they represent: indeed, that to talk only of "style" and "motif" is to diminish the true richness of art by limiting the extent of its domain.
>
> . . . . . .
>
> Impressionist technique embodies an apparent spontaneity that suits the idea of life seized on the qui-vive, a lack of finish that leaves room for improvisation, a heightened color, and animated brushwork that appeal to the sensuousness of our leisure-oriented culture: in short, a way of working that springs from our "natural" depths, not from the authority-ridden dogmas that thwart true feeling.

Herbert's sociological research convincingly reinforces the paintings he reproduces to demonstrate that Impressionism must be inserted into history—above all, into the history of the emergence of leisure. Compared with the work of Millet and early Courbet, Monet and Degas paint a universe without work. The thesis is evident, yet it is essential. It combines uneasily with another of Herbert's principal themes: detachment, an aesthetic attitude displayed particularly by Degas and Manet and directed toward their subjects and their own style. The word "apparent" at the beginning of the third quotation above carries a heavy burden, for Herbert himself has revealed the careful calculations on which Impressionist technique relies for its spontaneous effects. And I hope "apparent" modifies the jejune generalization of the last part of the sentence. The book is not everywhere so "old-fashioned" as Herbert claims in his ill-conceived preface in which he tries to review his own book.

HERBERT has deliberately limited his history by stopping it around 1882, and by omitting Pissarro, Sisley, and Cézanne. Those painters deal little with leisure motifs; they favor landscapes and portraits. The emphasis on leisure, consumer culture, and entertainment often leads Herbert to describe Impressionism as a near equivalent of yuppie painting: works flattened and a bit blurred by their uncritical response to a self-satisfied society. Herbert never mentions the word; I use it reluctantly. For "yuppie" remains an unsatisfactory category with an undeserved pejorative spin, and Herbert clearly loves and respects these wonderful paintings. The book attempts no sustained discussion of the optical, retinal, photo-influenced aspect of Impressionist style, or of the radical significance of studio practice versus plein-air practice. As William Seitz pointed out years ago, without the portable metal tube for paints

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that was developed in the 1840s we would have a very different history of 19th-century painting.

THE TRUE TEST of a book like this lies not in theory, but in ekphrasis. Herbert's alert eye first seeks an anecdote to explain the poses of the players in a scene, lingers convincingly over the structure, color, and brushwork, and finally consolidates the painting into a larger vision of the society. After a lengthy account of Second Empire racetracks, the discussion of Degas's *Jockeys in Front of the Grandstand* (1869-72) does not hide Herbert's admiration for its tinted shadows and accented orthogonals. Then he returns to his task:

> [Degas's] pictorial devices were profound expressions of his class and his era because they literally gave shape to aspirations and anxieties that his society formulated in the races. Tracks, horses, and jockeys . . . [were] embodiments of industrial capital's drive for productivity and speed . . . investments whose risk was measured by split seconds, mobile stock coupons who gave life to the spirit of competition and enterprise.

Might there not be also an element of distraction and escape from business? Must the critic roll each work of art back into one immense social ball of wax? Herbert has here produced one of his more rhapsodic social passages, probably because he responds strongly to the painting. He calls Monet's *Bridge at Bougival* (1869) "one of the great landscapes of the era," and details how its double structure is integrated by "carefully dragged" brush strokes and by gray-purple tones. But am I wrong to hear a dutiful note in his conclusion? "In its complicated network of geometric shapes, [Monet's] picture expresses his generation's wish to impose order and regular intervals over nature. It speaks unwittingly for the Second Empire's diagrams of control."

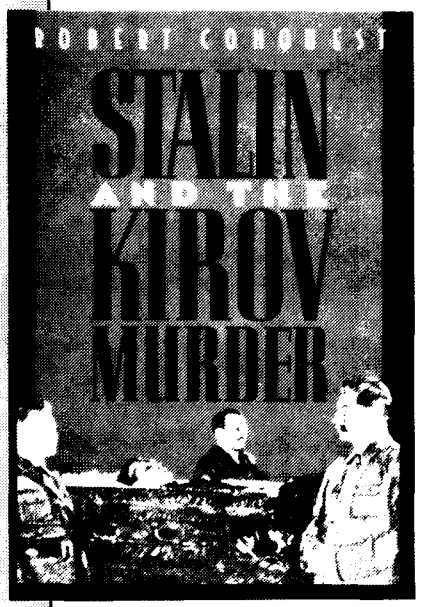
In the following paragraph, Herbert acknowledges this statement to be an extreme assertion of the social meaning of art, and defends it. All art embodies "struggles between an individual's subjectivity and concepts of social organization." The adverb "unwittingly" in the previous quotation hints at Herbert's unwillingness to settle on a single agent for a painting. Every force counts for him. Class, commerce, generation, politics, fashion engulf the artist. At times Herbert sounds as if he thinks society itself can paint a picture. When he begins talking directly about one of the several artists he values, he redeems himself by the trackings of his restless eye, by the aptness of his allusions.

The occasional lunges in Herbert's writing toward social determinism of art arise, I believe, from an oblique running dialogue he is carrying on with a book he mentions in the first paragraph of his preface, T. J. Clark's *The Painting of Modern Life: Paris in the Art of Manet and His Followers*, which appeared in 1985. Herbert states both that Clark's book has almost single-handedly reoriented the field and that, since he takes issue with much of what Clark writes, particularly with Clark's saturation in theory, the books have little in common. Still, they dance an elaborate minuet for us, to a music that many would call revisionism in art history.

Herbert dedicates his book to Meyer Schapiro and acknowledges him first among his "substantial debts." Clark opens his first chapter with a stunning full-page quotation from Schapiro's "The Nature of Abstract Art," which appeared in *The Marxist Quarterly* in 1937, on the objective forms of bourgeois recreation in the 1860s and 1870s. Both critics make extensive use of Georg Simmel's notions of detachment and the blasé, and of Thorsten Veblen's association of leisure and class. In both books Haussmann's remodeling of Paris topography plays a major role as an instrument of social control. Clark does not make up his mind whether the Impressionists opposed or welcomed these changes. Herbert, more forthrightly, refers several times to the "complaisance" displayed by the Impressionists toward the organization and commercialization of leisure. "The history of Impressionism is in part the acceptance of, even the indulgence in these changes." The combination of delightful Seine-side setting and silken brushwork in Renoir's *The Canoeists' Luncheon* (1879-80), for example, creates a painting that "hovers on the edge of ecstasy." Precisely. Perhaps "yuppie" is too weak a term for such complaisant painting.

Given their social and political outlook, and their deep suspicion of class as a structuring force in society, it strikes me as amazing that these two historian-critics never chide the Impressionists for having consented to a corrupt and destructive culture, and for having produced a highly decorative icing for a cake that revealed its rottenness as soon

A PRELUDE TO TERROR?



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as you cut into it. In fact, the opposite is the case. They love the stuff. Herbert is a wonderful author to learn from, and to spar with. But, more the historian than the theorist, he reveals in himself "two guys," as Flaubert said of himself. One guy documents the exploitation that transformed every aspect of life in the era, and loosened class distinctions without destroying them. The other guy treasures the sturdily formed yet informal-looking canvases created by a few painters who witnessed these changes, and even sought them out to record. In the great ekphrasis playoff, the first guy hangs around, always turning up for introductions, transitions, and conclusions. The second guy wins hands down.

ROGER SHATTUCK

Roger Shattuck's most recent book is *The Innocent Eye: On Modern Literature and the Arts* (Washington Square Press).

CHEKHOV IN CHICAGO

Noble Rot: Stories 1949-1988 by Richard Stern

(Grove Press, 367 pp., $22.95)

Noble Rot, the title of Richard Stern's collection, is a translation of the title of one of the stories, "La Pourriture Noble," and refers to the mold, or soil, essential for the cultivation of fine wine grapes. A peculiar, almost deprecatory choice, but one that was surely deliberated. I fancy Stern was attracted by the oxymoronic word collision, the high and low connotations. But it could be that he was also after a certain larger resonance, a suggestion that in an active career as a novelist (and essayist) he has tended to view his shorter fictions as a proving ground, or (to stay with the analogy) as a kind of compost for his more cherished growths. It is not likely that Stern's readers will back such a discrimination of relative worths. These stories are some of the liveliest and freshest around; they need not bow low before the novels.

Stern has been writing for more than three decades; he has produced, to date, some 15 books. Many—most—of them have been greeted with great critical enthusiasm. Reviewers, some of our most esteemed writers among them, have exclaimed over his inventiveness, over his psychological acumen, over the sheer sentence by sentence *sprezzatura* of his style. Yet for all this Stern is hardly a household name. In an era when writers barely old enough to drive are garnering enormous advances and, worse, enormous reputations, how is it that a writer of Stern's caliber still waits for recognition?

My own theory is that Stern has become identified in the public mind—in that part of the public mind that cares about these things—with his friend Saul Bellow. Not only do both live in Chicago and share an affiliation with the University of Chicago (Stern has taught there for over 30 years), but certain of their subjects and approaches could be said to overlap. Both tend to feature educated and culturally sophisticated male protagonists in their novels. Thinkers and talkers. And these Herzogs and Citrines, Wursups (*Natural Shocks*) and Riemers (*A Father's Words*), are, as often as not, in various stages of romantic disrepair. They get divorced, chase skirts, and suffer in the amatory arena. They also take time out to brood over the larger state of things. Bellow, the senior, gets the Nobel Prize; Stern, in many ways as talented, gets seen as the shadow-man.

Such superficial perceptions can play havoc with a worthy writer's reputation, and need to be countered. For Stern is no more derivative of Bellow than, say, Raymond Carver was of Hemingway. The resemblances are nothing beside the differences of style, temperature, and vision. Bellow is a seeker, a metaphysical dramaturge; his focus is on the soul-condition of late-20th-century man. Stern is a crisper and quicker talent. He is a realist looking at the here and now. He is Chekhov to the other's Tolstoy, and to choose between them is a mistake.

In *Noble Rot*, Stern includes stories from three previous collections (the earliest from *Teeth, Dying and Other Matters*, 1964), as well as a generous assortment of fugitive pieces. He has made no attempt to render his development chronologically. Stories from different epochs sit side by side like guests at a banquet. A prefatory note explains: "The arranger thinks of the reader as a story lover looking forward to his nightly story fix." Enough said; the sequences have been arranged with an eye to the pleasures of diversity. And this they supply in abundance.

The reader not familiar with Stern's other work will marvel first at what a variegated surface the characters, situations, and styles compose. Stern is by turns fast and talky, drolly lugubrious, whimsical, ironic, and straight-on matter-of-fact. Prodigally inventive, he is as gifted with burlesques as with more serious modes. The sharp sense of discontinuity that we register between one story and the next all but forces us to savor the works in isolation—in nightly fixes. Which is also the best way, for they are written with an ear and a sensibility (the former serving the latter) as delicate as any in the business. Which brings up the second striking attribute of this prose: that it is quite dramatically different from the prose of the novels. Noble rot? Why not just say it's a different vintage?

Listen first to the opening passage of the novel *Natural Shocks*, which appeared in 1978:

> Three years after Frederick Wursup moved across Lexington Avenue and turned his office into his home as well, he discovered that he could see his old apartment—where his ex-wife, Susannah, still lived with their two sons—from the roof. He'd never paid any attention to the cross-planked square on the ceiling of his back bathroom, but it was through this that Mr. Spinkel, the janitor, admitted the roofers one September afternoon. They climbed through and Wursup followed, hoisting himself up from the lidded toilet seat. While they checked for clogged spouts and worn asphalt, Wursup surveyed the avenue.

The setup is traditional. The principal characters and their governing context have been deftly sketched in. The reader is taken by the hand and led, one step after another, into the world of the novel.

Now consider (these excerpts are representative) the openings to two of the stories. "Idylls of Dugan and Strunk" begins:

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On a hunch, Strunk took the check over to Dugan in the hospital. "Is this your baby?"

Dugan's head is mummified, chin to scalp; the coca-colored eyes peer over the damaged cheeks. "Lire. The rat." He passes the check to Prudence, sitting in the armchair.

"In the Dock," meanwhile, starts out with these sharp assertions:

I've cut lots of corners. Dochel's Nail of the Month claims I do little else. Her delicate point is that I've wasted my talent.

The gulf between the modes is enormous. The novel invites, seduces with narration. The stories, on the other hand, almost always plunge us in medias res and set our reading antennae to bristling. We have to work to sort out the references, chronologies, and twists; half the time the key to a given story is buried in some casual remark or snatch of off-kilter dialogue. While the exertion is initially great, often slowing our involvement, the payoff is worth it. Collaboration brings the contours more firmly into place; the receptors, tensed up by the effort, register the word music and the sentence rhythms more acutely. Stern, more than most contemporary stylists, writes to be *heard*.

I can do little more than suggest the range of character and situation in these 32 stories. Stern has challenged himself to penetrate the confined but emotionally intricate lives of a great gallery of so-called "ordinary" people. The pages teem with grumbling husbands and wives, depressed grad students, small-time operators, lovelorn spinsters, struggling retirees—but there is room as well for professors, thinkers, and leisured travelers. All have been rendered with a fascination for circumstance and setting—for the why and how of their dailiness—and with an eye for their psychological particularity.

In "Teeth," for instance, a less-than-gainly Miss Wilmot endures an epic of dental woes, dreaming of romantic redemption at the hands of her dentist, Dr. Hobbie. Stern's sharp-eyed but loving staccato captures the feel of her solitude:

. . . Miss Wilmot had a bad night. The heat was low, her bed was cold. She got up, put on her sweater and the furry bathrobe her father'd sent her for her birthday. Feb. 2. Thirty-one. She turned on WFMT. Buzz. It was three o'clock. Dr. Hobbie'd be coming home from the Tall Girls. She sat back in the terrible green armchair she'd gotten at Carmen the Movers for eight dollars. A troglodyte. The only arms that ever held her.

But in fact the night is young. Miss Wilmot ends up in Dr. Hobbie's office for what has to be one of the most extraordinary sessions of emergency dentistry ever recorded. The outcome, so to speak, must be left for the curious reader.

"Zhoof," retrospectively one of the more memorable tales in the book, grows out of what at first might seem the slightest of episodes. Powdermaker is a distinguished-looking Jew—in fact, a professional distinguished-looking Jew (he makes his living posing for glossy advertisements). He is traveling by train in Europe when he encounters, and gets snubbed by, a middle-aged German couple. He sits down near them in the dining car; they get up and change seats. Powdermaker hears the man mutter "Zhoof," which he realizes just a second later is his mishearing of "Juif":

Sitting with his cold white wine by the beautiful lake, Powdermaker felt as if his head had been sliced like a grapefruit and put on a plate. Everything cold in the universe poured into his decapitated trunk. His heart thumped, his hands shook the wineglass, perspiration rolled from forehead and cheeks to the white tablecloth.

A part of Stern's artistry is reflected in

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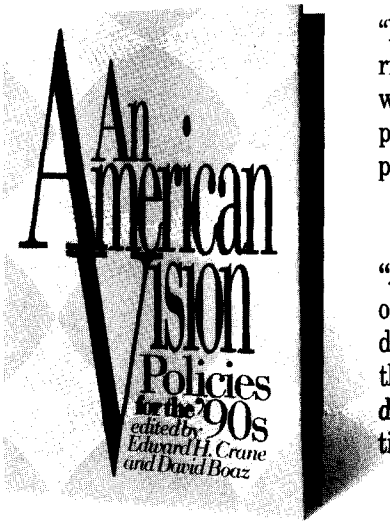

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his use of the double take, the tiny lag between the hearing and the grasping. How better to suggest the caesura between our animal selves and the elaborate structures of civility? No less original, though, is his way of building upon the horrific moment. First, Powdermaker finds that the man's hatred has invaded him. He broods over fantasies of vengeance. But Stern denies him any direct gratification. Powdermaker must experience, instead, what amounts to a New Testament kind of forgiveness. He must turn the other cheek:

> As the train pulled into Brussels' Gare du Nord, the couple stood behind Powdermaker. When he got off, he looked behind. The woman looked at him, flushed, almost pleading. He gave her a small nod, a sympathetic, a human nod. She understood.

For all the variety among these stories, there is nonetheless one situational archetype, one motif, which recurs often enough to set a mood swirling about the whole. This is the bittersweet legend of failed love that is reprised in various guises, though nearly always from the vantage of the man. In "The Sorrows of Captain Schreiber," an officer stationed in a small French town falls in love with a certain Mlle. Verité. After a dutiful courtship—a courtship during which we are drawn into the vicissitudes of town life—Schreiber succeeds in winning her affections, only to find that he has been transferred to another post. He promises to return, of course; and he does. But what he learns is that his Verité has gone off with his black corporal, Tiberius. The triangle is as old as Adam, Eve, and the snake, but Stern reanimates it with incisive pacing and phrasing:

> He started to say, "What's wrong?" but he couldn't summon the French for it.
>
> Old Cassat said, "Mlle. Verité is gone, Captain, gone off."
>
> "With the black one," said his wife. "No one knows where. Nearly two months."
>
> Schreiber looked at them all and turned away. At the gate he said in English, "A taxi is waiting for me."
>
> He walked down the side path to the river. He didn't dare look at the bridge.
>
> The taxi should be coming soon, he thought. He wondered if he should wait for it in the bushes and then slip under the tires. "I'm thinking of suicide," he thought. "Over love." In his pain, he was almost proud. He said, "*Un peu ridicule.*"

The story continues for a few more paragraphs, just long enough to take the weight of portentousness off this beautifully managed inner exchange: an unobtrusive discrimination of tones and tongues has recapitulated all the folly of his involvement with the faithless Verité.

Other voices tell of other pains. In "Orvieto Dominos, Bolsena Eels," Edward, the would-be seducer, is deserted by his quarry, Vicky, in the Italian hill town of Orvieto. None of the fabled pleasures of the region can assuage his sense of defeat. After a restless night in a local hotel, he finds his way, via Baedeker, to Lago Bolsena, famous for its eels. But Edward has no appetite for eels; he has already stopped at a roadside trattoria and gorged himself on rolls with jam and butter. Ignoring the signs about not swimming "dopo pasta," Edward heads far out into the water. But then "he felt a fire shoot through his stomach . . . Cramps." No, Edward does not drown. Nothing so dramatic. He vomits into the lake and then gasps his way back to shore. Finis.

Stern, like his Russian counterpart, favors the diminuendo ending, especially for these narratives of ill-sorted love. The narratives themselves are apt figures for the greater part of earthly experience, which is probably why Stern is so drawn to them. Over and over he plays the spume of fantasy and expectation against the limiting wall of circumstance and human nature. Juggle the terms and you get something like "nobility" versus "rot." In the realist's vision, life is always a diminishment of the desired, seldom an abject failure, but always a disappointment. A compassionate art makes the truth bearable, even tonic.

SVEN BIRKERTS

Sven Birkerts's *The Electric Life: Essays on Modern Poetry* has just been published by Morrow.

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CORRESPONDENCE, *from page 6*

her pain, it is a family that struggles, and not just the patient. "Intransigent individualism" may work for Susan Sontag, but it is precisely that which, in my opinion, makes my wife retreat further into her internal world. In the "language of responsibility," the responsibility for coping does not disappear with her into that world, but is transferred to my family, and my wife becomes a dependent person, however debilitating and disre-

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spectful that may prove to be.

My daughter and I do not begrudge my wife finding solace within, but we are also not so uncaring as to leave her alone in there, though at times she angrily demands it. We are intrusive upon that "peace." To say that "hortative solidarity" is "not always respectful of the immense solitude of the ill" is a truism, but it also makes respect sound wishy-washy, cruel, and abandoning.

FRED DICKERSON
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

To the editors:

Perhaps unintentionally, your cover for the December 26 issue leaves the clear impression that Evian spring water is poison and that people who drink it will die. I drink the stuff myself instead of polluted tap water and have not, as yet, keeled over. Don't you think you owe your readers an explanation?

BURLING LOWREY
Washington, D.C.

REAGAN AS GOD

To the editors:

I have read some pretty silly things in THE NEW REPUBLIC, but TRB's comments in "Legacy? What Legacy?" (January 9 & 16) take the cake. Reagan, says the man, has been brain-dead throughout his presidency. True, the record of success is phenomenal; true, we and the world are in dramatically better shape than we were eight years ago. But Reagan had nothing to do with it; it was done by God.

Has it occurred to you, TRB, that maybe Mr. Reagan *is* God?

WILLARD R. ESPY
New York, New York

The editors welcome correspondence from readers. Letters should include the writer's full name, address, and telephone number; be typed double-spaced; and be held to under 200 words. Letters may be edited for space. Please address letters to: Correspondence, TNR, 1220 19th Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036.

TRB, *from page 4*

order by which alone we can live as human beings, and . . . the only punishment that can do this is capital punishment." There is an appealing majesty to this view. But it is not at all clear that this is the lesson executions teach. If the Florida celebrants were thinking high-minded thoughts about the moral order, they did not show it. And soberer citizens, reading about the previous day's electrocution in the morning paper, may equally draw the lesson that killing is OK when some sufficiently powerful entity finds a sufficiently compelling reason to do it.

Bundy's example to the contrary notwithstanding, capital punishment falls most heavily upon the black and poor, especially if their victims are white and rich. But this argues as powerfully for increasing the reach of the death penalty as for abolishing it. Nor will it do to dismiss capital punishment as "lawful murder," unless we are also prepared to dismiss imprisonment as "lawful kidnapping."

The great practical flaw of capital punishment is that it opens up the possibility of executing the wrong person. This doesn't seem to have happened lately, but it could. Eroll Morris's superb documentary film *The Thin Blue Line* details the case of Randall Adams, an almost certainly innocent man sentenced to death and saved from execution only by the fluke of an unrelated Supreme Court decision, who still awaits justice in a Texas jail.

Because we rightly fear such travesties, because we rightly abhor the calculus of accepting the execution of one innocent person to facilitate the execution of many guilty ones, we have elaborate procedures to prevent this most irreversible of all miscarriages of justice. But these indispensable procedures, because they take time, amplify the cruelty of capital punishment, which consists more in the waiting than in the killing.

Camus likened the death penalty to "a criminal who had warned his victim of the date at which he would inflict a horrible death on him and who, from that moment onward, had confined him at his mercy for months. Such a monster is not encountered in private life." Camus was wrong: Ted Bundy was a monster worse even than that. And Camus was right: the penalty is too cruel, even when, as in Bundy's case, the cruelty is deserved. Berns correctly locates the meaning of execution in society's duty to instruct itself. Bundy killed cruelly and coldly, thus meriting death. So we killed Bundy, less cruelly but more coldly, thus demeaning ourselves. In giving Bundy his deserts, we—the social order—deprived ourselves of ours. And we are more important than any murderer.

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WASHINGTON DIARIST

Read My Clips

AS A 37-YEAR-OLD single male, I long ago got used to parties where the girls won't talk to me because I'm too old. (Opening line: "Gee, the last time I was here was to protest against the War." Response: "What war was that, World War II?" Tee hee.) But I'm not used to parties where the *guys* think I'm too old. This is starting to happen, and I resent it. Listen, youth. I'm not one of those Lee Atwater fogies who thinks rock 'n' roll stopped with "High Heeled Sneakers." I keep up with your music. Most of it stinks, but I like New Order and The Cure. I'm hip. Is that term still used?

I SHOULD PROBABLY give up and face the harsh reality: I've been left behind by my generation. I kept pace through the law school craze of the '70s, but since then I've been frozen in time, like Elvis, while my fellow postwar babies have gone booming off with their lives. I missed the condo-buying boom and the trading-up boom and the move-to-the-suburbs boom. I missed the cocaine boom and the cocaine addiction treatment boom. I missed the marriage boom. Now my erstwhile peers babble obsessively about their babies' sleep schedules. I feel like I've been lapped. Even my Breuer chairs are fraying. Am I bitter? Of course not. There are advantages to missing the boat. Whatever it is the boomer mass momentarily lusts after, be it ranch houses or oat bran, goes up in price. If you're ahead of the curve, if you buy your house in 1974, you can make a killing. But if you're in the middle of the curve (buy your house in 1986) you usually get gouged. If you're behind the curve, like me, you can be a scavenger poking over the boom's discarded and discounted fetishes. As a low-budget renter, I didn't catch the real estate inflation train. But now boomers have tired of condos and the price is falling. I'll be there to snap one up cheap. "A bottom feeder," a friend called me. It's not bad. Bring on the divorced women.

RETURNING TO D.C. from New York, I was surprised the capital didn't seem richer. The advance of chrome and marble downtown seems to have slowed. My tatty old dry cleaner occupied a choice corner that seemed destined to house a branch of, say, The Limited. It's still a tatty dry cleaner. The local pizza parlor (Hispanics pretending to be Greeks pretending to be Italians) is grimy as ever. All this will change if Congress decides—it's deciding as this is written—to keep its 50 percent pay raise. The 535 congressmen at $135,000 a year are the least of it. More than 10,000 bureaucrats who now make from $69,000 to $83,000 will automatically make $77,000 to $125,000. (If low pay has kept the government from hiring competent people, why boost the pay of the existing incompetents?) Naturally, tens of thousands of "private sector" consultants, lawyers, and lobbyists will need raises to keep pace. In 1977 this magazine (in a special issue called "The Good Life in Washington Is Bad for America") said the capital had become "a prosperous and preposterous city whose population is completely isolated from the people they represent and immune from the problems they're supposed to solve." That's still true. But now the pay scale will be about 20 percent higher than in '77, after inflation. Why no outcry from the Washington press? Perhaps because most reporters will directly profit from the raise too; the value of their houses will increase. The *Washington Post* will now monopolize more advertising in a richer community. Virtually everyone in town stands to benefit—except me. The prospective price of the abandoned condo-of-my-dreams just went up about $10,000.

I HOLD OUT hope the raise won't stick. It was recommended by a commission chaired by attorney Lloyd Cutler, a venerated Washington "player" with a proven lack of political judgment. As "wise man" in the Carter White House, Cutler urged his boss to make the dedication of the JFK presidential library in Boston the occasion for a legalistic critique of Kennedy's arms control record. (Carter, wisely, ignored him.) Now Cutler defends the pay raise with the snooty argument that mere major league baseball players will still make more. The astoundingly impolitic size of the raise could give challengers all the ammo they need to unseat House incumbents—if the increase stands Cutler may inadvertently have solved the grave problem of Congress's 98 percent re-election rate. Meanwhile, grateful local merchants could erect a statue of Cutler in the parking lot of the Tyson's Corner shopping mall.

DOES LIFE SEEM emptier in the Bush Era? Does to me. How to allocate the cost of cleaning up nuclear plants? Should the drug czar be a member of the Cabinet? I don't find myself bounding out of bed mornings eager to debate these vital questions. Not that there aren't compelling issues around. One is the underclass. Typically, Washington fragments this into a variety of special interest concerns: "Children at risk." The spread of AIDS. Drugs. "Urban development." Declining schools. Hunger. Homeless families. Illiteracy. These are not distinct problems. They are all, mainly, the underclass problem—the symptoms of a subculture that seems incapable of adjusting to meet a new threat (be it AIDS, crack, or guns in schools). Which is why it was so depressing that the paragraph on the underclass in Bush's inaugural speech was a near-incoherent stream of consciousness rap: In the slums there are young women "about to become mothers of children they can't care for and might not love." But we "bless them" for having these children. But wait a minute, "we have a deficit to bring down" so the government can't do anything about it anyway. Never mind.

CONSERVATIVES RIGHTLY SAY the "culture of poverty" can't be cured just by spending money. But culture doesn't fall from the sky. It comes from somewhere. Mainly it comes from how people get what they live on—their "relations of production," if you will. I'm a Marxist about it. (Read my clips!) The "relations of production" for the underclass are welfare and crime. Change that substructure—specifically, replace welfare's cash payment with an offer of day care and a job—and you'll transform underclass culture. Everything else—early schooling, preaching "values," "parenting" courses, religion, Bush's country club voluntarism—is just, um, bourgeois tinkering with the superstructure. Is that term still used?

MICKEY KAUS

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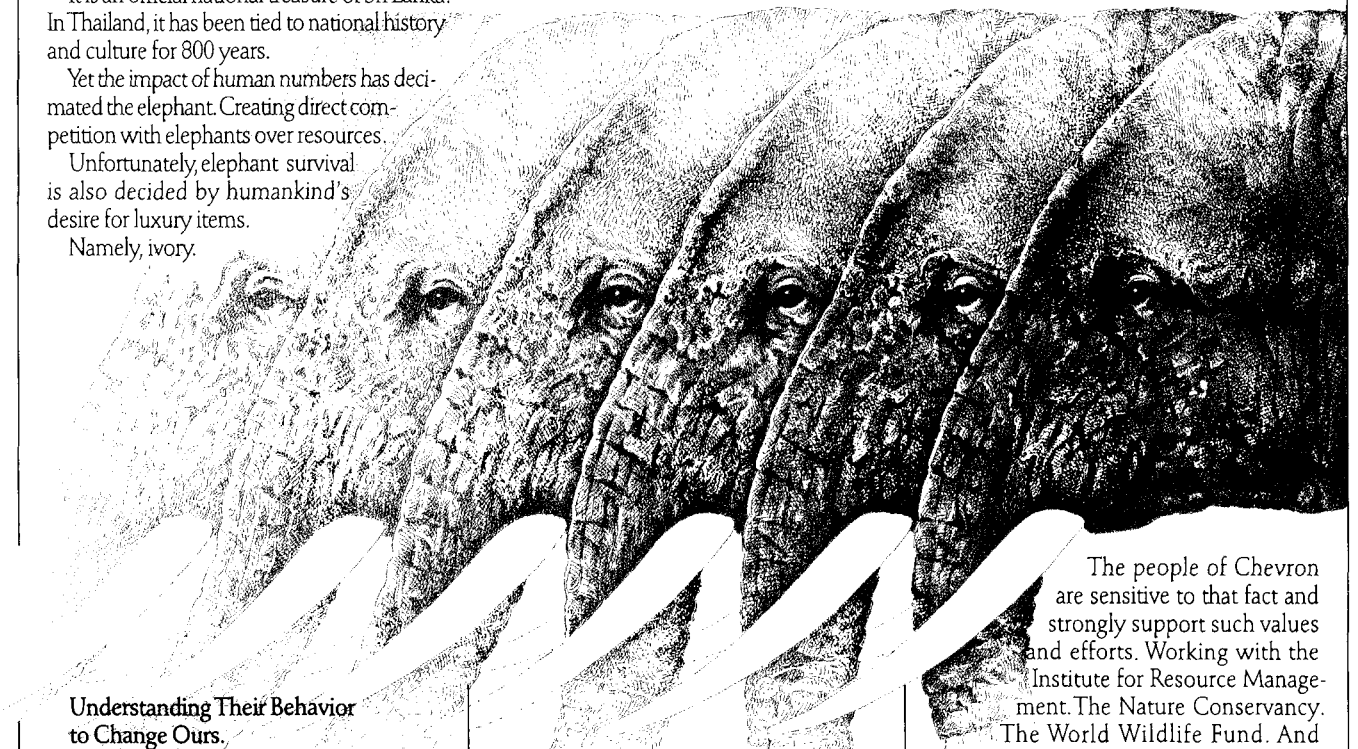

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But there are no definite answers now. In much of southern Africa, elephants are protected in national parks, but their numbers often become too great. And, some say, herds must be culled. In other areas, the situation is truly deteriorating.

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